

THE HEART OF DHAMMAKĀYA MEDITATION

by

Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo

The text of *The Heart of Dhammakāya Meditation* is recommended for everyone because of its significant value. The text is not only of great academic value, but also provides immeasurable spiritual benefits for those who practice it.

Phra Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo should be highly commended for his efforts and dedication to help others understand *Vijjā Dhammakāya.*

The Most Venerable
Somdej Phra Buddhajahn
Abbot, Wat Srakesa
Rajavara-Mahavihara
President, Dhammakaya
Buddhist Meditation Institute

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Based on the Teachings of
The Most Venerable
Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni

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DEDICATION

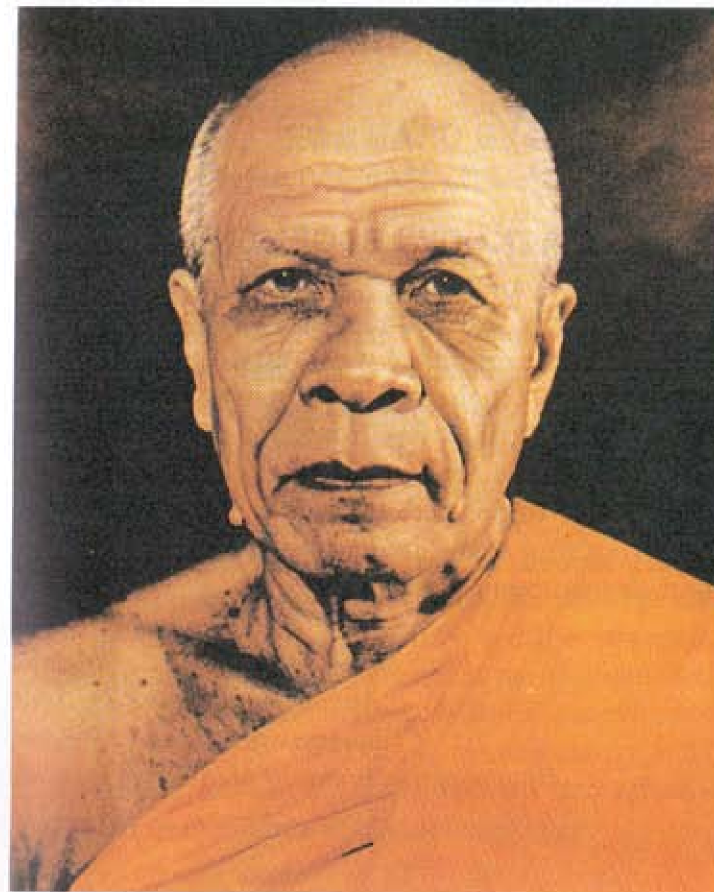


Figure 1: Luang Phor Sodh Candasaro

With deepest reverence, we dedicate this book
and any Merit it may generate to
The Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol Thepmuni
Luang Phor Sodh Candasaro
who cleared the path for us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to all *Dhamma* devotees who have contributed in many ways toward the publication of this book. Their total support was indispensable. They include Dr. Tan Pek Hong, Mr. Victor Toh Peng Kee, Mr. John Ladalski, Dr. Barton Sensenig, Mr. Rengson Mualchontham, and Mr. Vuthichai Achariyaphorn, to mention a few. May all be blessed for their meritorious efforts.

Phra Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo
Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh
Dhammakayaram and Director,
Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Institute

FORWARD BY SOMDEJ PHRA MAHARAJMANGKALAJAHN

About five hundred years after the *Great Decease* of Lord Buddha there remained no evidence of the *Dhammakāya* meditation technique. After devoted practice, the Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni restored the principles of *Dhammakāya* meditation and taught them. Today the approach has become well-known once again.

The Venerable Chao Khun PhraMongkol-Thepmuni once said that *Dhammakāya* meditation would be known all over the country, primarily because it penetrates right to the heart of the practice of purification. Defilements such as greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, wrong-view, doubt, sloth, restlessness, shamelessness, and lack of moral dread are uprooted naturally and effectively. *AVIJJĀ* or ignorance *VIJJĀ* or knowledge.

Dhammakāya meditation is not a new practice, as many believe. It is the original Buddha-Teaching. *Dhammakāya* meditation is the exact path that the Buddha practiced. It is cited many times in the Tipitaka (Buddhist Canon), and directly follows the *Noble Eightfold Path* which is classified into the three categories of *SĪLA* or, morality, *SAMATHA* or *Right Concentration* and *VIPASSANĀ* or *Right Wisdom*. In

combination with the Four *Satipaṭṭhāna* or *Foundations of Mindfulness,* the *samatha* and *vipassanā* will advance to *Right Wisdom* pertaining to the *SAṄKHĀRA* or compounds and, *VISAṄKHĀRA* or non-compounds. The *Right Wisdom* of the *Four Noble Truths* will be unfolded. *Nibbāna* or freedom from all conditioning and suffering will thus be attained.

Without Lord Buddha, this teaching would never have been known and practiced. Without the Venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, *Dhammakāya* meditation would never have been well-known again. It is unsurpassingly lucky to have this book in your hand. Various benefits will be gained even at the beginning of *Dhammakāya* meditation practice.

The Most Venerable
Somdej Phra Maharajmangkalajahn
Abbot, Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen
Vice President, Dhammakaya
Buddhist Meditation Institute

FORWARD BY PHRA BHAVANA-KOSOLTHERA

Cease to do evil; cultivate doing good and purify your mind. That is the *Teaching* of the Buddhas. This has been regarded as the heart of the practice of Buddhism. In modern society where dissatisfaction often runs deep and disturbs the world populace, the wise are again coming to see the disillusionment of their sensual search and are turning their attention spiritually inward. Many have come to testify to the value of observing and practicing the *Teaching* and making the *Dhammā* a reality within their own hearts.

Hard to control, unstable is the mind; it flits wherever it likes. Good is it to subdue the mind. A subdued mind brings happiness. Meditation, in turn, leads to a calm, controlled and enlightened mind.

This book The Heart of *Dhammakāya Meditation* deals with meditation practice as expounded by the Master of *Vijjā Dhammakāya* , my own teacher, the late Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni. He is our prominent spiritual leader who is revered throughout the land and fondly known as "Luang Phor Wat Paknam." The author and my pupil, the Venerable Phra Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo, is an experienced and accomplished meditation instructor who is to be admired

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Sermchai Jayamanggalo

Based on the Teachings of
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for presenting the subject clearly, systematically and succinctly.

Learning *(pariyatti)*, practice *(paṭipatti)*, and achieving the end purpose *(paṭivedha)* are the three main parts of Buddhist tenets. This book should inspire many readers. It is based upon the author's teachings as spoken from the heart, from the depths of his own meditative experience. This book should serve well to present concisely the second and third parts of the Buddhist tenets (concentration *samādhi* and wisdom *paññā*) to many meditation practitioners.

Venerable Chao Khun
Phra Bhavana-Kosolthera
Deputy Abbot & Director of
Meditation Affairs,
Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In 1916 (B.E. 2459), Luang Phor Sodh Candasaro (Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni) rediscovered the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach to meditation which had been lost sometime during the first five hundred years following the passing away of Lord Buddha. The technique leads the meditator directly along the path to enlightenment and emancipation by combining concentration *(samatha)* and insight *(vipassanā)* meditation techniques. It is, thus, extremely focused and effective. *Vijjā Dhammakāya* practice has become popular and widespread in Thailand. This book is intended to make the method more widely available to English speakers.

This text is for all who seek to understand reality or the meaning of life as well as those who seek inner purification. Wisdom and virtue develop hand-in-hand. As the meditator progresses beyond the distortions of the passions, insight sharpens and understanding deepens.

Vijjā Dhammakāya

Meditation begins with turning the powers of observation and awareness inward. We are accustomed

to perceiving the outside world, but introspection requires special effort. Steeped in science, we have prided ourselves on "objectivity" while remaining largely unaware of inner biases.

Traditional scientific objectivity required isolation from the object observed. Since quantum mechanics, science has recognized that we are part of the world we perceive and what we see depends on how we look at it. Meditation is like polishing a lens to enable us to see more clearly. Skill in meditation develops the ability to perceive experience directly without the distortions implicit in conceptualization.

Many seekers turn to meditation because of dissatisfaction with life. This is the universally experienced sadness/suffering/tension *(dukkha)* on which Lord Buddha based the *Four Noble Truths*. But, this motivation to ease tensions or cope with anxieties is only a starting point. Many meditation techniques will provide relief on this worldly level. The beauty of *Vijjā Dhammakāya* is that it leads directly upwards from this plane to more and more refined, purer and purer levels of awareness.

Vijjā Dhammakāya does not require blind faith. You do not have to believe in Buddhism to benefit from it. It is a method for training the mind to become concentrated and keenly aware, focused inward at the center of the body. With practice, you will encounter new experiences for yourself and will develop confidence.

The effectiveness of the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach derives from focusing attention at the center of the body and combining three meditation techniques simultaneously. Meditators often debate the efficacy of concentration *(samatha)* versus insight *(vipassanā)*. *Vijjā Dhammakāya* employs elements of both. Higher and higher levels of concentration enable insight to progress from more worldly *Right Understanding* to supramundane *Right Wisdom*.

The Book

The *Heart of Dhammakāya Meditation* is based on lectures given at the Buddhist Vihara, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur during a three-day visit to Malaysia, August 1st to 3rd 1990. In addition, I have included the chapter on Basic *Vijjā Dhammakāya* Meditation Practice to complement the theoretical aspect of the three lectures from the practical viewpoint.

The original lectures were interspersed with meditation practice. In fact, the procedure was usually to practice first and discuss afterwards. We have had to adopt a more academic approach for the general reader, but I urge all to try practicing the meditation approach presented. Basic *Vijjā Dhammakāya* practice is described in Chapter V and additional aids such as sound and video tapes are available from the Dhammakāya Buddhist Meditation Foundation (DBMF).

The First Edition of this book was published by the DBMF in March 1991, largely due to the devotion and dedication of our Malaysian colleagues at the Dhamma-

kaya Meditation Resource Center (DMRC) in Kuala Lumpur. This Second Edition was revised in the United States to make the teachings available to a wider audience.

Chapter II considers the relationship between Concentration-Insight Meditation *(Samatha-Vipassanā)* and the *Noble Eightfold Path*. Chapters III and IV deal with the development of *Right Concentration* and *Right Wisdom* respectively. Chapter V presents *Dhamma* practice according to the *Dhammakāya* approach. Chapter VI lists questions and answers, and Chapter VII provides a summary and conclusion. The appendices provide a biography of our spiritual leader, the late Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni and the premeditation service, including the requesting and accepting of the five precepts of morality.

For precision, Pali terms are included throughout the text along with their English renderings. Pali is presented in italics using the Romanized alphabet according to Warder (1991)[1]. The letter *ṃ*, sometimes written as *ṁ*, is pronounced "ng". Pali words are defined in the Glossary and philosophical debates are discussed in the Notes. Capitalization is used to distinguish between *dhamma* and *Dhamma*, where the former refers to all compound phenomena and the latter to the teachings of Lord Buddha.

In Pali, words which are singular or plural will not be differentiated by the suffix "s" like in English text. Instead, they are written in different forms, e.g. *Dhamma* (singular) and *Dhammā* (plural). To avoid confusion for those who are familiar with English gramma, here in

this book, the suffix "s" is added to represent the plural form like in English text, but it is printed in Roman bold type and slightly smaller, e.g. "All the *Dhammas*".

Technical Buddhist terms like *Right Understanding*, *Five Hindrances*, and *Eightfold Path* are italicized to indicate that they should be understood in the special sense intended by the Enlightened One. The word *Right*, for example, relates to the absolute or ultimate as opposed to the conventional "right" which is a matter of personal point-of-view.

I welcome comments from all readers and critics. I will feel that all these efforts are worthwhile if readers practice the meditation technique and realize for themselves what *Vijjā Dhammakāya* is all about.

Chapter II

CONCENTRATION-INSIGHT MEDITATION
Samatha-Vipassanā

Meditation by concentration of the mind to remove the *Five Hindrances* is known as *samatha*, while the contemplation of physical body, feelings, mental functions and phenomena *(dhamma)* to develop *Right Wisdom* is called *vipassanā*. The *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach includes aspects of both *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation.

After Enlightenment, Lord Buddha taught *Four Noble Truths*. These are *Suffering (dukkha), the Cause of Suffering (samudaya), Cessation of Suffering (nirodha), and the Noble Eightfold Path (magga)* leading to the extinction of suffering. *The Noble Eightfold Path (ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo)* consists of *Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Live-lihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Con-centration* of mind. *Dhamma* practices leading to the *Noble Eightfold Path* are classified under the three cat-egories, i.e. *sīla* or morality, *samatha* or *Right Concen-tration* and *vipassanā* or *Right Wisdom.*

Sīla

Let's first consider how to follow the first three folds of the *Noble Eightfold Path* which are known as *sīla* (morality). These are *Right Speech*, *Right Action* (or conduct), and *Right Living* (or Livelihood). When a person accepts precepts and practices *sīla*, it helps to prevent wrong speech and wrong action resulting from wrong mind, which arises under the influence of greed, attachment, anger, ill-will or delusion. Practicing speech, bodily action and mind based on the precepts of morality helps us become more and more peaceful.

Samatha

Samatha Meditation leads us to the next three folds of the *Noble Eightfold Path*. These are *Right Effort*, *Right Mindfulness*, and *Right Concentration*. The practice of *Samatha* Meditation deals with concentration. It helps to remove the *Five Hindrances* (*nivaraṇa*) to wisdom which are attachment to sensual desire, ill-will, inactivity or sleepiness, anxiety or restlessness of mind, and doubtfulness. *Samatha* Meditation also helps to develop mind powers *(abhiññā)*, especially supernormal vision and supernormal hearing. These, in turn, assist in the development of supernormal knowledge of the past and future. *Samatha* also helps in learning about the natural *Law of Kamma* (cause and effect) as well as rebirth. This is very helpful for developing *Right Wisdom* in *Vipassanā* meditation. *Samatha* meditation also helps to calm down and remove craving, passion, and attachment to compounds or worldly objects.

Vipassanā

Vipassanā meditation is the technique for developing Right Wisdom. This derives from contemplation of the four *Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna)*, the physical body, feelings, mental functions and phenomena *(dhamma)*. It includes *Right Wisdom* with regard to the *Five Hindrances*, the *Five Aggregates*, the *Four Noble Truths*, and the *Twelve Links* in the *Chain of Dependent Origination (Paṭiccasamuppāda)*.

Concerning *Right Wisdom*, we should develop *Right Understanding* of the two fundamental aspects of Nature: First is *Right Understanding* of the three common characteristics of compounds. Lord Buddha said:

sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā
All compounds are impermanent.

sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā
All compounds are unsatisfactory
or subject to suffering.

Therefore, any person who attaches to compounds with craving and delusion will suffer, according to the degree of attachment. Finally,

sabbe dhamma anattā
All compounds are devoid of self.

Some translate the phrase *sabbe dhamma* literally as "all phenomena" (both compound and non-compound). This is not true. According to Lord Buddha's Teaching

in the *Dhammapada* Pali text, as interpreted by the original commentators whom we believe the Noble Ones and by the most recent translators (Carter and Palihawadana 1987) [2], the words *sabbe dhamma*, in this context, refer only to the *Five Aggregates*. These are *saṅkhāra* or compounds. Thus, the reference excludes pure, non-compound aspects of nature such as *nibbāna*.

The second aspect of nature to be discerned with *Right Wisdom* is *Right Understanding* of non-compound nature *(visaṅkhārā)*. This means "the pure" and pertains to *nibbāna*. The Pali Canon and Commentaries describe *nibbāna* as not subject to change, of pure essence *(dhammasāraṃ)*[3] and absolutely permanent *(niccaṃ)*[4]. It is everlasting *(tādi/dhuvaṃ)*[5], with no more death and rebirth. Any person who attains *nibbāna* will find supreme peace and happiness *(nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ)*.

The Noble Eightfold Path

Vipassanā Meditation also helps to develop *Right Wisdom* of the *Four Noble Truths*. These include the *Noble Eightfold Path* as the *fourth Noble Truth*, the path leading to the cessation of all suffering. *Vipassanā* leads to *Right Thought* and *Right Intention*. *Right Thought* pertaining to the *Four Noble Truths* and *Right Intention* for the removal of all passions. This includes the subtlest passion, mental attachment *(anusaya kilesa* or *āsava kilesa)* and the subtlest ignorance, especially inherent misconception *(avijjāsava* or *avijjā anusaya)* which is the root cause of suffering.

Vipassanā also helps to cut the *Chain of Dependent Origination*. Initially, ignorance *(avijjā)* gives rise to impression *(saṅkhārā)*, impression brings about consciousness *(viññāṇa)*, consciousness originates the psycho-physical organism *(nāma-rūpa)*, and this results in the sense organs *(saḷāyatana)*. These, in turn, bring about contact *(phassa)*, feeling *(vedanā)*, craving *(taṇhā)*, attachment *(upādāna)*, will-to-become *(bhava)*, rebirth *(jāti)*, and the suffering of old age, sickness, despair, sorrow and death *(jarā-maraṇa)*.

When the Noble Eightfold Path is perfectly cleared, at least the following three fetters will be cut:

- *Wrong View (sakkāyadiṭṭhi)* about the characteristics of all compounds
- *Doubtfulness (vicikicchā)* about the *Dhamma* practice leading to *nibbāna*
- *Wrong Religious Practices (sīlabbataparāmāsa)*

Those who have fully opened the *Noble Eightfold Path* and are able to cut these fetters will become *Noble Ones*, beginning as *Stream Enterers (sotāpanna)*.

Vijjā Dhammakāya

Let us consider the principles underlying the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach to *samatha vipassanā* meditation. Some may think that the approach is new and is not in the scriptures or is not Lord Buddha's teachings. In fact, this method is exactly the teaching of Buddha.

The final goal of meditation is to reach *nibbāna* by removing all ignorance and passions, and by developing *Right Wisdom* regarding the path of attainment. All this is possible when you reach *Dhammakāya*. *Dhammakāya* is really Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha said in the *Suttantapiṭaka, Dīgha- Nikāya, Pātika-vagga Aggañña-Sutta:*

tathāgatassa hetaṃ vāseṭṭhā adhivacanam
Dhammakāyo itipi, Brahmakāyo itipi,
Dhammabhūto itipi, Brahmabhūto itipi.

This means *Dhammakāya* is the name of Lord Buddha, or is Lord Buddha. Both Lord Buddha and the other Noble Ones *(arahanta)* spoke of *Dhammakāya*. They described *Enlightenment* or attainment of *nibbāna* through the arising of *Dhammakāya*.

So, Lord Buddha or the *arahanta* is really *Dhammakāya* which is the purest element. It is non-compound, and very different from the crude body. The crude body is a compound thing like the *Five Aggregates*, which is subjected to change. Anyone who is attached to such compounds will suffer, because soon the compounds will no longer exist. The *Dhammakāya arahanta* is not of that character. He is permanent. The Pali word *dhammasāraṃ* means "essential" and *niccaṃ* means "permanent." *Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ* means *nibbāna* is the highest or supreme happiness (pertaining to something which exists forever). The Pali words *tādi* or *dhuvaṃ* are used when referring to *nibbāna* which is non-compound like *Dhammakāya*. Lord Buddha said:

Bhikkhus, non-compound nature exists; if the non-compound or purest nature were non-existent, there would be no detachment from that which is compound. It is due to the existence of the non-compound that detachment from the compound becomes possible.

Nibbāna Sutta III.[6]

Some ask why nobody mentioned *Dhammakāya* earlier. In fact, all of this information is in the scriptures. Then, why did so many overlook it? I can only answer that Luang Phor Wat Paknam, in particular, meditated all the way to *nibbāna* and could see these two natures, the compound and non-compound, exactly as Lord Buddha described them. I cannot comment on those who say otherwise. Those who hear this *Dhamma* which talks about both the compound and the non-compound *(nibbāna)* are very lucky.

In the following chapters we will examine the principles of *samatha* and *vipassanā* along with *Vijjā Dhammakāya*. You will see that the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach is exactly in accordance with Lord Buddha's teachings and aims directly at supramundane *Right Wisdom and Nibbāna*. The *Dhammakāya*, which is the purest element, is non-compound and possesses characteristics of *nibbāna*. Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught his disciples to aim at the *Right*, purest *Dhammakāya* nature, or *nibbāna*, and to understand *nibbāna* in all aspects.

We have seen that Lord Buddha was enlightened to the *Four Noble Truths*: *Suffering, the Cause of Suffer-*

ing, *Cessation of Suffering*, and the *Noble Eightfold Path* leading to the extinction of suffering. We have also described the three basic *Dhamma* practices that develop the *Noble Eightfold Path*: *sīla* or observance of moral precepts, *samatha* meditation for concentration of the mind to remove the *Five Hindrances*, and *vipassanā* meditation which involves contemplation of the physical body, feelings, mental functions and *dhamma* to develop to *Right Wisdom*.

When the *Noble Eightfold Path* is firmly established, meditators will be able to cut at least three fetters *(saṅyojana)*. These are wrong view regarding the characteristics of compounds *(sakkāyadiṭṭhi)*, doubtfulness about the *Three Gems* and *Dhamma* practices *(vicikicchā)*, and wrong practices *(sīlabbataparāmāsa)*. With these fetters removed, practitioners will be able to become *Noble Ones* and attain *nibbāna*.

Summary

In summary, meditation by concentrating the mind to remove the *Five Hindrances* is known as *samatha*, while contemplation of the physical body, feelings, mental functions and *dhamma* to develop *Right Wisdom* is called *vipassanā*. These meditation practices must be based on *sīla* or moral precepts. Anyone practicing these *Dhamma* can be sure they will attain *Right Wisdom* concerning *Suffering*, the *Cause of Suffering*, *Cessation of Suffering*, and the *Noble Eightfold Path* leading to the extinction of suffering—in short, the *Four Noble Truths*.

The *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach includes aspects of both *samatha* and *vipassanā*. It is not a new doctrine. *Dhammakāya* is mentioned in the scriptures and the method follows exactly Lord Buddha's teachings. This meditation technique leads directly to *nibbāna*. *Dhammakāya* is the non-compound. Thus, it is *nibbāna* and is Lord Buddha. The approach is especially effective because the meditator who has reached *Dhammakāya* can see and experience both compound and non-compound nature. With practice, he or she can cut the fetters and become a *Noble One (arahanta)*.

Chapter III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RIGHT CONCENTRATION

Samatha Practice

Meditation by concentrating the mind is known as *samatha* (serenity). *Samatha* removes the *Five Hindrances (nivaraṇa)* and prepares the mind for Wisdom (*Vipassanā*) meditation. The *Five Hindrances* are attachment to sensual desire, ill-will, inactivity or sleepiness, anxiety or restlessness, and doubt.

The mind is accustomed to flitting from object to object in the outside world. Concentrating the mind and bringing it in requires effort, but the mind cannot be forced. Therefore, Lord Buddha taught various concentration devices.

Concentration Devices

Lord Buddha taught forty concentration devices or meditation subjects for tranquilizing the mind (Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification*).[7] They are the ten recollections *(anussati)*, ten meditations on impurities *(asubha)*, ten complete objects *(kasiṇa)*, four immaterial absorptions *(arūpajhāna)*, four divine abidings *(brahmavihāra)*, one perception *(āhāre paṭikūlasaññā)* or contemplation of the impurity of material food, and one

defining contemplation *(vavatthāna)* on the *Four Elements* (earth, water, fire, and air).

The *ten anussatis* or recollections are *buddhānussati* or recollection of the virtues of the Buddha, *dhammānussati* or recollection of the virtues of the *Dhamma*, *saṅghānussati* or recollection of the virtues of the *saṅghā*, *sīlānussati* or recollection of the duties of morality, *cāgānussati* or recollection of generosity, *devatānussati* or recollection of celestial beings, *maraṇassati* recollection of death, *kāyagatāsati* or mindfulness of the body, *ānāpānasati* or mindfulness of breathing, and *upasamānussati* recollection of *nibbāna* or peace.

The ten impurities or kinds of foulness *(asubha)* are the bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut-up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm-infested, and a skeleton.

The ten *kasiṇa* or complete objects are earth, water, fire, wind, space, light *(āloka kasiṇa)* and the four colors or *vaṇṇa kasiṇa* (blue, yellow, red, and white).

The four divine abodes or *brahmavihāra* are loving kindness *(mettā)*, compassion *(karuṇā)*, sympathetic joy *(muditā)*, and equanimity *(upekkhā)*.

A meditator can select any one or combination of these forty meditation subjects, according to his or her own character. For example, *kasiṇa* concentration is very suitable for those with sensual desire, restlessness of mind, or inclination toward anger, hatred or ill will. For those whose habits are intellectual thought, devo-

tion or delusion, mindfulness of breathing *(ānāpānasati)* and recollection of Buddha's virtues *(buddhānussati)* are most suitable.

Vijjā Dhammakāya Meditation

Vijjā Dhammakāya Meditation is based on four principles: three methods of concentration and the Principle of the Center. The three concentration techniques are: meditating on an object of visualization *(kasiṇa)*, recollection of Lord Buddha's virtues *(buddhānussati)* and mindfulness of breathing *(ānāpānasati)*

The Principle of the Center specifies that these three methods of concentration are all applied simultaneously at the center of the body. Thereafter, meditation proceeds to successively higher levels by always focusing at the center of the center. This combination of techniques is effective for meditators of all different types.

The Object of Visualization

The *Vijjā Dhammakāya* object of visualization *(parikamma-nimitta)* is usually a luminous sphere or translucent Buddha Statue. In *bhāvanā* or meditation practice, we teach visualization of the light sphere *(āloka-kasiṇa)*.

When you visualize, your mind resides in the object you conceive. Whatever you see in the mind, your mind is right there. If you think about a member of your household, your mind will be with them. If you visualize a sphere and you see the sphere, it means that all four

components of the mind have come together inside the sphere. This is why we ask you to imagine a sphere, to concentrate the components of the mind. If you lose mindfulness of the sphere, you will see something else. This means your mind has gone elsewhere. Try to keep visualizing in order to keep your mind inside the sphere.

The four components of the mind are the spheres of vision, memory, thought and awareness. Use all four in imagining the sphere. Visualize it. Remember what the sphere is like. (It is transparent like this, clear like this...) Think about the sphere all the time. There is a transparent spot at the very center of the sphere. Keep your awareness focused there. Don't let the mind wander away. Know all about the sphere.

Visualization progresses through three stages on the way to the first state of absorption *(jhāna)*. First is ordinary perception. The meditation object *(kasiṇa)* visualized at the beginning is called the preliminary vision *(parikamma-nimitta)*.

As the meditator concentrates on the light object and commits it to memory, the image becomes more and more refined, clearer and clearer, until it looks like a crystal ball. This is known as the learning sign *(uggaha-nimitta)* and is the first level of meditation. Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught his disciples to visualize the light sphere or *parikamma-nimitta* until the *uggaha-nimitta* appears.

When the meditator concentrates at the center of the *uggaha-nimitta* until it becomes very clear, bright and

still, he or she will become able to enlarge or reduce it. Then, the counterpart sign *(paṭibhāga-nimitta)*, which looks like a crystal sphere, will emerge. This is the second stage of concentration, the light object *(āloka-kasiṇa)*, and is called *parikamma-bhāvanā* or preliminary meditation.

The appearance of the *āloka-kasiṇa* marks the beginning of substantial meditation. The purpose of this approach is to bring all of the mind components in the crystal sphere to be more and more perfectly concentrated at the center of the body. This concentration helps to remove all the passions such as inactivity or sloth, sleepiness and doubtfulness.

When the meditator stops still at the center of the light object *(paṭibhāga-nimitta)*, he or she will feel delight in this state of mind and ill-will will be removed. If fear creeps in, the practitioner will lose this state, but if he or she continues to become more and more peaceful, stopping still at the center of each center to become more and more refined, the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* will become very bright and clear, and the meditator will feel very happy or blissful. Restlessness of mind and anxiety will be removed. By keeping the mind still at the center, all sensual desires will be removed. This stage is the first absorption or *paṭhama-jhāna*. This is concentration on the light object or *āloka-kasiṇa*. It is one of the easiest and most effective methods for concentrating the mind.

Recollection of Buddha's Virtues

Vijjā Dhammakāya meditation combines visualization of the light object *(āloka-kasiṇa)* with recollection of Buddha's virtues. *Buddhānussati* is cultivated by means of a repetitive word or *mantra (parikamma-bhāvanā).*

The *Vijjā Dhammakāya mantra* is *"sammā arahaṃ"*. *Sammā* means *Right, Highest* or *Ultimate*. It stands for *sammāsambuddho* which means the *Buddha's Supreme Right Enlightenment* or *Supreme Right Wisdom*. The word *arahaṃ* means the virtue of the Buddha being far away from passion. In other words, it represents perfect purity. Thus, when you repeat the words *sammā arahaṃ sammā arahaṃ*, you are calling Buddha's wisdom and purity into your mind. This is *Buddhānussati* or recollection of Lord Buddha's virtue.

The meditator mentally repeats *sammā arahaṃ* while simultaneously visualizing the light object *(āloka-kasiṇa)*. The recitation helps to make the vision of the sphere bright and clear.

Mindfulness of Breathing

Vijjā Dhammakāya Meditation also combines mindfulness of breathing *(ānāpānasati)* with visualization of the light object *(āloka-kasiṇa)* and repetition of *sammā arahaṃ*. All three techniques are focused at the center of the body.

Those who perform mindfulness of breathing or *ānāpānasati* correctly stay mindful of the breath touching a fixed point and visualize it. They do not follow the breathing in and out or up and down. In this way the mind becomes more and more refined and finally stops still. Luang Phor Wat Paknam applied *ānāpānasati* to the center of the body to help the mind become concentrated there.

To focus the mind at the center of the body where your breathing ends, concentrate your mindfulness at the center of the light sphere and observe your breathing in and out. Your breath passes through the sphere and you can visualize it. This is mindfulness of breathing or *ānāpānasati*. Do this until you see the sphere clearer and clearer, then forget about the breathing.

Ānāpānasati helps the mind become concentrated more quickly. As the mind concentrates, breathing becomes shallower. The mind becomes more and more refined until it stops still at the center of the body. This is the purpose of *ānāpānasati*.

The Principle of the Center

The fourth foundation of *Vijjā Dhammakāya* meditation practice is the Principle of the Center. Luang Phor Wat Paknam discovered that the mind naturally resides at the center of the body, two finger breadths above the navel. Only when the mind is at rest at the body's center can one penetrate to the full depths of the *Dhamma* as it was revealed to Lord Buddha.

Using the three techniques described, the meditator first brings the *āloka-kasiṇa* sphere to the center of the body. Then, he or she proceeds to focus again and again at the "center of the center" of concentric spheres as they appear. In this way, the meditator progresses through more and more refined body-minds to *dhamma-kāya* and *nibbāna*.

This combination of techniques applied at the center of the body can help meditators of all types to solve their problems and achieve rapid success in *samatha* meditation. It is especially effective because all three methods are appropriate across a wide range of psychological tendencies.

Drawing the Mind Inward

The uncontrolled mind is attracted outward through sensory contact and flits restlessly from object to object. Bringing the mind to concentrate at the center of the body requires considerable effort. You cannot, however, force the mind. If you try, it slips away. This is why Vijjā Dhammakāya uses the light sphere, *sammā arahaṃ* and *ānāpānasati* to concentrate the mind and make it tractable.

Coaxing the Mind

Don't force the mind too much. If you force it, the sphere goes away. On the other hand, if your energy is too slack, the sphere will also disappear and you won't know where it has gone. If you feel too eager to see the sphere, you can't. It's gone again.

Mental training is like pressing a ping pong ball into water. You must have the right balance. Relax a little. Don't press too hard. Don't be anxious, but don't be slack or allow sleepiness to creep in. Just coax the mind. Soothe it evenly and peacefully. The mind is something you cannot force.

Keep your mind alert at all times. If the mind wanders away, recognize it immediately. Bring the mind back as soon as it goes off somewhere.

How do you bring the mind back? Just visualize the sphere and repeat *sammā arahaṃ*.. The mind will come into the sphere again. That's all.

The Path to the Center of the Body

Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught a specific method for beginning meditators to bring the light sphere *(āloka kasiṇa)* to the center of the body. There are seven positions along the way (See Figure 5, page 60). We will study this in detail in Chapter V. Let us, however, summarize the method here to complete consideration of *samatha* meditation.

Begin by visualizing the sphere at the nostril aperture (Position 1), for ladies on the left and for gentlemen on the right, while mentally reciting the words *sammā arahaṃ* about three times to keep the sphere clear and still.

What is the proper size of the sphere? Whatever you can visualize. About the size of an eyeball will do. Don't worry that a larger sphere couldn't fit into the nose. All transparent things can go anywhere. Whatever the starting size, the sphere will become even larger if the mind stops still.

Move the sphere from your nostril upwards into your nose to the eye-socket (Position 2), for ladies on the left, for gentlemen on the right. Move it inside the eye-socket, not outside. Focus your mind at the center of the sphere inside your eye-socket and mentally recite the words *sammā arahaṃ, sammā arahaṃ, sammā arahaṃ*.. Then, move the sphere slowly, keeping your mind at its center by seeing the transparent spot at the center of the sphere.

Slowly move the sphere to the center of the head (Position 3). Where is the center of the head? Suppose you have two lines, from the front to the back and from left to right. The intersection of those two lines is the center of your head. The sphere should be in line with your eye-sockets, not above or below.

After you have mentally recited the words *sammā arahaṃ, sammā arahaṃ* to keep the sphere still at the center, move it downwards slowly to your palate, the ceiling of your mouth (Position 4). Just visualize that the sphere can go anywhere. Don't bite it, just see it. Repeat the words *sammā arahaṃ, sammā arahaṃ* at least three times to keep the sphere still.

You may find difficulty in moving the sphere downwards. That is because your mind is used to being outside all the time. It is difficult to bring it inside and it requires some time to train the mind. If you meditate correctly, you will be able to bring your mind in. *Vijjā Dhammakāya* is one of the most effective methods for doing this. It may be difficult for the beginner, but later it becomes easier.

To solve the problem of bringing the mind with the sphere downwards into the center of the body, roll your eyeballs upwards a little bit temporarily. This makes your mind components move backwards and downwards. Then, focus your attention at the center of the sphere and move it downwards, position by position.

Mentally move the bright, clear sphere slowly and directly downward to rest at the throat aperture (Position 5). Repeat the words *sammā arahaṁ* to yourself three times to keep the sphere bright and clear and to hold it steady.

Next, move the sphere down to the center of the body, in line with your navel (Position 6). This is the end of the path of your breath. Repeat the words *sammā arahaṃ, sammā arahaṃ* here, about three times, then move the sphere upwards about an inch. Not exactly an inch, just approximately (about two finger breadths). This is the final location (Position 7) where the mind naturally resides at the center of the body.

This technique for drawing the mind inward is a preliminary practice. Meditators who can do it and

know where the center of the body is do not need to move the sphere from starting to final position every time. They can begin directly at the center of the body in the seventh position. Those who find difficulty in moving the mind into the center of the body will just have to practice patiently until they can do it well.

The Center of the Body

When the mind stops still at the center of your body, the psycho-physical elements (water, fire, wind, earth, space, and consciousness) are all at one-pointedness. You can see with your mind the actual light sphere or *paṭhama magga* which is your own real nucleus. It is very bright and luminous.

When you see this, forget about all visualizations. Forget about reciting the mantra. Just rest your mind at the center. Then, the center will expand itself. More and more refined spheres will appear. Just stop still at the center of the center of each, until you reach the most refined one. Then, stop still.

When your mind stops still at the center of the body you can see your own *dhamma*. Why do I say *dhamma* is here and not in the scriptures or elsewhere? Because all practices of body, speech and mind regarding *Right Action, Right Speech*, and *Right Thought* lead to the mind becoming purer and purer at the center of the body. This is where the mind performs its functions. If you meditate at the center of your body, your mind will become purer and purer.

Pure Form

Purification of the mind is the purpose of mindfulness *(satipaṭṭhāna)*. When you see your mind is impure, you must purify it right away. You do this by holding it still at the center of the center until you reach pure *dhamma*, the purest mind and body you can attain. This is the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* practice.

When your mind is perfectly concentrated at its most refined and purest state, the center expands and you can see your own refined human body *(manussakāya)* at the center of the sphere within your crude human body. This is the result of proper meditation. It means your human-level *dhamma* is pure and happy.

Then, larger and larger spheres will appear within the refined human body. As you continue, you can reach celestial *dhamma* and see your own celestial body and mind *(dibbakāya)* which is about double the size of the human body. As your body and mind and the elements of the *Five Aggregates* become purer and purer you can reach the Brahman Body *(rūpabrahmakāya)* which is about double the size of the Celestial Body. Next, you will see the Formless Brahman Body *(arūpabrahmakāya)* which is about double the size of the Brahman Body. Don't worry about the name; whatever you see, that's it.

Don't be surprised when you see the refined body becoming larger and larger, very refined, very beautiful with adornments and very radiant. This is due to the

merit which you have performed. Proceed to become the more and more refined bodies and minds, by placing your mind at the center of the center of each.

When your mind reaches the purest state, you will see *Dhammakāya*. It looks like a transparent Buddha statue, radiant with a lotus-bud upon the head. The standard height is about nine meters in width and height. That is the preliminary size. From then on, subsequent *Dhammakāyas* will be larger and larger, and more and more refined. They become very radiant, and up to forty meters in height and width. Do not be surprised.

You might ask "Why practice according to this approach in which the meditator sees the body larger and larger?" If you can see an angel or *deva*, the real *deva* or *brahma* is even larger. Don't be surprised. You can be sure of this. There exist internal bodies. There are at least eighteen bodies, each more and more refined, purer and purer, until the most refined body, the *Dhammakāya*. You will perceive *Dhammakāya* when your mind is at the purest. By stopping still at the center of the center, you will pass through the spheres of all mundane bodies (the *manussa, deva, rūpabrahma* and *arūpabrahma* bodies), until you reach the supra-mundane body, *Dhammakāya*. Then, you have attained *nibbāna*.

Why can you reach *nibbāna* during meditation? So long as you purify your mind by stopping still at the center of the center, your mind will become purer and purer until it temporarily reaches the purest. This is temporarily way beyond, or above, or far away from the passions, due to meditation. This is called *vikkhambhaṇavimutti*. In

that state of mind you can see *nibbāna*. You can see Lord Buddha who exists in *nibbāna*. Don't doubt it. This is in the Scriptures. Lord Buddha says that there is a supra-mundane place. Ayatanaṁ means the Supra-mandane place, where those who attained Dhammakaya see countlees Loard Buddas and disciples, is existing.

> *atthi bhikkhave, tadāyatanaṁ...*
> Monks, there exists the sphere of *nibbāna...*
>
> *Pataligamiya vagga*
> *Nibbāna Sutta III*

Summary

Samatha meditation aims at concentration to remove the *Five Hindrances*. Lord Buddha taught forty meditation devices. *Vijjā Dhammakāya* utilizes three of these simultaneously, focused at the center of the body. They are visualization of the light object *(āloka kasiṇa)*, repetition of *sammā arahaṃ*, and mindfulness of breathing or *ānāpānasati*. Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught how to use these techniques to bring the mind inward to rest at the center of the body. Here you can see your own true nucleus or *dhamma* where the results of *Right Action, Right Speech* and *Right Thought* can be observed. Continuing to concentrate and purify your mind at the center of the center, you can pass through eighteen internal body-minds until you reach non-compound *Dhammakāya* and temporarily attain *nibbāna*. In this state you can see *nibbāna* and Lord Buddha who resides in *nibbāna*.

Chapter IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RIGHT WISDOM
Vipassanā Practice

Vipassanā practice aims at development of *Right Wisdom* with regard to the *Five Hindrances, Five Aggregates*, the *Four Noble Truths*, and the twelve links in the *Chain of Dependent Origination*. It consists of contemplation of physical body, feeling, mental functions and phenomena *(dhamma)*.

I have collected the following information from the scriptures, along with the rendering of the famous commentator, Acariya Phra Buddhaghosa, whom we believe to be a *Noble One*. His interpretations of Lord Buddha's Teachings have become the texts for Pali study in Thailand, from the elementary to the advanced level. Other materials presented here are collected from the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* teachings of Luang Phor Wat Paknam, the Most Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol Thepmuni, and his disciples.

All of this information I am very sure is valid and leads directly to the supra-mundane state of *nibbāna*, our ultimate goal in practicing Buddhism. Some words may be a bit difficult to understand, especially for beginners in the study of Buddhism. I will try my best to make them clear by using simple explanations.

Vipassanā practice can be divided into two levels: mundane *Right Understanding* of compound phenomena *(saṅkhāra*, which is called *anupassanā* and supra-mundane *Right Understanding* of non-compound nature *(visaṅkhāra)*. The first level focuses on mindfulness of the *Five Hindrances* to wisdom and helps develop *Right Understanding* of the impermanence of compound phenomena such as the *Five Aggregates* of our body-mind complex. However, this level cannot remove cravings permanently. The meditator must proceed to supra-mundane *vipassanā* practice to develop *Right Understanding* regarding the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Chain of Dependent Origination (paṭiccasamuppāda)*.

Vijjā Dhammakāya meditation is especially effective for bringing meditators beyond the mundane to the supra-mundane. In the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach, practitioners learn not only by studying, listening and reading texts, but also by seeing and feeling for themselves. As their minds become purer and purer, meditators come to see that they have *Dhammakāya* within themselves. This is very efficient. It develops *Right Understanding* and *Right Wisdom* through direct experience as well as learning from scriptures. It is not just imagination as some critics suppose.

Compound Phenomena

Vipassanā meditation reveals that all compounds, including the *Five Aggregates* of the psycho-physical organism, are impermanent and subject to change. That is why they cause suffering to those who attach to them with craving and delusion. Finally, *vipassanā* discloses

that such compounds as your "self" do not exist. All compounds are "non-self" *(anattā)*[8].

Contemplation of compounds *(anupassanā)* is comprised of four practices: contemplation of the internal and external physical body *(kāyānupassanā)*, contemplation of feeling or sensation *(vedanānupassanā)*, contemplation of mental functions *(cittānupassanā)*, and contemplation of compound phenomena *(dhammānupassanā)*.

When the meditator has concentrated the mind at the center of the body, the meditator can see his or her own real nucleus or *Dhamma* Sphere *(paṭibhāga-nimitta)* where all practices of body, speech and mind regarding *Right Action, Right Speech* , and *Right Thought* lead to the mind becoming purer and purer.

The Five Aggregates (*khandha*)

The psycho-physical organism is composed of the *Five Aggregates*, the body and four mind components. The form aggregate or *rūpakhandha* consists of the elements of water, earth, fire (temperature), wind, space, and cognition. The cognitive element contains the four mind aggregates. The crude physical body is the outside aggregate made up of all these elements.

The four mind components are: (1) vision, feeling, and sensation *(vedanā)*, (2) memory and perception *(saññā)*, (3) thought *(saṅkhārā)*, and (4) awareness *(viññāṇa)*. These are pure elements in the form of concentric spheres at the center of the body. With concentration, each center enlarges itself, emerging as a

sphere. First comes the sphere of vision, then memory, then thought, and finally the sphere of awareness.

By refraining from unwholesome (bad) conduct, performing wholesome acts, and purifying your mind, your mind will become purer and purer. The *Five Aggregates* and their elements become purer and purer. The sphere you see becomes pure, transparent, bright and refined. You can be sure that your mind, together with your body, or all elements of the *Five Aggregates* are also pure and refined. The purer your mind becomes, the more you will receive good results in the form of happiness and well-being. But, if you perform bad deeds and do not purify your mind, then the five elements of mind and form *(nāma-rūpa)* become impure. The sphere becomes cloudy and impure with passions which will cause you troubles in life and unhappiness.

This is what Lord Buddha taught, the contemplation of *dhamma*. *Dhamma* is located at the center of your body. Mindfulness through contemplation of *dhamma* purifies the mind and the *Five Aggregates*. This leads to more and more refined mental states, revealing more and more refined body-minds. This is what happens when you keep your mind still at the center of the center. So long as your mind is pure, how can you do anything bad?

Characteristics of Compounds

When you purify your mind beyond *arūpabrahma*, you will reach *Dhammakāya*, the purest state of mind. *Dhammakāya* is non-compound. From here you can see clearly that all bodies at any level below this are compounds composed of the *Five Aggregates*. They are all subject to change and anyone who attaches to them will suffer because compounds do not last forever. Realization of this is the purpose of mundane *vipassanā* meditation *(anupassanā)*. The meditator develops *Right Wisdom* about the three common characteristics of compound things. You learn:

sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā
All compounds are impermanent.

sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā
All compounds are suffering.

sabbe dhammā anattā
All compounds are non-self.

Non-Compound Nature

Non-compound nature, however, is not described by these three characteristics. When one meditates, he or she becomes more and more refined, purer and purer, until the purest *Dhammakāya* state of mind is reached. Then one can experience and see *nibbāna* for oneself. In *nibbāna* you can see the *Enlightened Dhammakāya* of Lord Buddha. Those who have attained the *Dhammakāya* level can see both compound and non-compound nature.

Nibbāna, the supra-mundane sphere is permanent, supreme happiness, existing forever.

Let us consider contemplation at the supramundane level in greater detail. At this level, the practitioner contemplates higher-level *Dhamma*: *The Five Aggregates (pañcakhandha)*, the *Four Noble Truths (ariyasacca)*, *Dependent Origination (paṭiccasamuppāda)*, the *Twelve Bases of Cognition* (of the six sense organs), the *Eighteen Elements (dhātu)* and the *Twenty-two Potential Faculties (indriya)*.

In this state of mind, we aim at removal of ignorance, the root cause of suffering, by analyzing the Twelve Links in the *Chain of Dependent Origination*. From ignorance originates impression, impression originates consciousness, consciousness originates the psycho-physical organism *(nāma-rūpa)*, the psycho-physical organism originates the six sense organs, the six sense organs originate contact, feeling, craving, attachment, rebirth and suffering due to old age, sickness, and death.

Supra-mundane *vipassanā* meditation also involves contemplation of the external physical body as well as all its internal parts. We find, in reality, that all the parts of the body are impure. Not even a single part is pure.

Then, supra-mundane *vipassanā* meditation proceeds to help develop higher levels of *Right Understanding* of the *Four Noble Truths*, especially about suffering. One who attains *Dhammakāya* can visualize the sphere of

suffering at the center of the body for each person or other creature. The sphere of suffering contains the sphere of old age, the sphere of sickness, and the sphere of death. For example, when a person is going to die, his or her sphere of death will appear at the center of the sphere of the human body. When the sphere of the human body separates from the sphere of the celestial body, the person dies. This is the way to learn deeply about suffering within one's own self or suffering within other people.

As the practitioner develops to higher supramundane levels, he or she comes to understand the *Four Noble Truths*, attachment to the *Five Aggregates*, and *Dependent Origination*. Subsequently, the meditator will also develop the *Seven Enlightenment Factors*. All these realizations will develop along the *Noble Eightfold Path*. When the *Noble Eightfold Path* is followed perfectly at that level, the practitioner can cut all fetters to worldly objects and become a *Noble One*.

All these aspects of *Right Understanding* help the practitioner to calm his or her mind and remove the passions of hatred, ill will, sensual desire, greed and delusion – especially excessive desires. He or she comes to understand that the more one is attached to any compound with craving and delusion, the more sufferings he will have. Thus, the practitioner learns how to make the mind neutral and peaceful. This supramundane level of meditation can effectively cut fetters, reduce or remove passions, and lighten attachment to this world.

The *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach is very efficient in developing this *Right Understanding*. When you sit

in meditation and concentrate by keeping your mind still at the center of your body, your mind becomes purer and purer until you attain more and more refined bodies. Eventually you will reach the purest state of mind, *Dhammakāya*. Then you will be able to see clearly with your inner vision that all of the mundane bodies from the human *(manussakāya)* up through the more and more refined bodies such as the celestial *(dibbakāya)*, Brahman *(rūpabrahmakāya)* and Formless Brahman *(arūpabrahmakāya)* are impermanent, subject to change, and non-self.

Vijjā Dhammakāya meditation develops the faculties of supernormal vision and hearing. You can come to see the whole mundane world, starting from the *Sensual World (kāmaloka)* to the *World of Pure Form (rūpabrahmaloka)* and the *Formless World (arūpabrahmaloka)*. You can see the hells and celestial worlds whenever you like. Through meditation you come to see how all worldly creatures suffer. They suffer in the suffering worlds because of their own unwholesome *kamma*. They experience happiness in the happy worlds due to their wholesome *kamma*.

Supernormal vision and hearing are very helpful for the development of supernormal recollection of former existences. Those who have attained the *Dhammakāya* level can also understand rebirth and the passing away of beings. They develop the supernormal knowledge to see former existences of themselves and of other mundane creatures, as well as to see the future or results of *kamma*.

You can also attain supernormal knowledge of cause and effect, the *Natural Law of Kamma*. You can see with your supernormal vision that whoever performs good *(kusala)* actions will be reborn in a happy world. In contrast, those who commit bad or unwholesome *(akusala)* actions will be reborn into suffering worlds such as hells or as animals or ghosts. You come to know that until they overcome their ignorance, all mundane creatures will be reborn in either happy or suffering worlds, according to the nature of their constantly changing *kamma*. Mundane existence is impermanent, changing endlessly, sometimes happy and sometimes sad. After seeing all these facets of nature, you will understand.

The meditator can see the effects of *kamma* directly. Those who commit unwholesome acts and violate precepts of morality regularly will see their refined bodies, especially their refined human body, become impure and look unhappy. On the other hand, those who perform good, wholesome *(kusala)* conduct will have pure refined human bodies and more and more refined bodies, according to the quality of their daily actions. As their minds become purer and purer, they can attain *Dhammakāya* and see their *Dhammakāya* within.

When we analyze *Dependent Origination* at the supramundane level, we learn that ignorance causes craving which leads to attachment and eventually to rebirth. From ignorance comes craving along with bad conduct, bad speech and bad thoughts. These, in turn, cause attachment and rebirth. This is the *Chain of Dependent Origination*. Its nature can be understood

through meditation according to the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach up to the *Dhammakāya* level.

Thus, in the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach, we know not only by studying, listening and reading, but also by seeing directly for ourselves. This is very efficient. It develops *Right Understanding* by seeing and feeling as well as learning from the scriptures. It is based on experience, not imagination.

If you follow the right method, you can see whatever you want to see. To develop higher-level *Right Understanding*, like about *Extinction of Suffering (the Third Noble Truth)*, practitioners stop still at the exact center of purer and purer bodies. The mind becomes purer and more refined, with purer and purer *Dhammā*. When meditators reach *Dhammakāya*, they can continue purifying themselves by stopping still at centers of the *Dhammakāyas*. More and more refined, purer and purer *Dhammakāyas* will appear until they become non-compound in nature. That is the way one purifies one's mind.

This approach leads one to *Extinction of the Cause of Suffering*. As meditators purify themselves by becoming more and more refined minds, bodies and *dhammas*, they become mindful of the *dhamma*, hence becoming even purer and purer *dhamma*. Eventually, they can attain to the state of non-compound nature. This is *nirodha* or the *Extinction of Suffering* by experience, not just thinking about it or imagining it. Practitioners can purify their minds in this manner until they remove all fetters entirely. This is the most efficient meditation

—seeing and feeling as well as learning from the scriptures.

Pursuing the *Noble Eightfold Path* via this *vipassanā* practice while maintaining *Right Concentration* at all times develops higher and higher levels of *Right Wisdom* from mundane to supra-mundane levels. *Right Concentration* of mind is easily achieved by the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach because it starts with concentration on a device or object such as the light object *(āloka-kasiṇa)*. The *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach also includes mindfulness of breathing *(ānāpānasati)* and recollection of Lord Buddha's virtues *(buddhānussati)*. These are helpful for calming the mind and concentrating the mind at one-pointedness. Thus, *Vijjā Dhammakāya* provides an efficient and effective method for both concentrating the mind and contemplation to develop *Right Wisdom*. This is what I have learned both from my own experience and that of my colleagues.

The *Path* may be difficult; for some, very difficult, because the *Dhammakāya* sphere is not attained easily. But, for sure, this is the most efficient way to concentrate your mind, especially for those who can develop into *Dhammakāya*. To develop *Right Concentration*, we must be sure of the way. We must develop meditation to the first state of absorption *(paṭhamajhāna)*. People who cannot reach this level cannot cut the fetters. They don't have sufficient attainment of the *Noble Path* which includes *Right Concentration* of mind. Any method that helps to develop *jhāna* or absorption levels is good. The fetters must be cut before complete removal is possible.

natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa,
natthi paññā ajhāyino, yamhi jhānañca
paññā ca, sa ve nibbānasantike

Without absorption there is no wisdom,
Without wisdom there is no absorption, and
He who has both absorption and wisdom
is near to *nibbāna*[9].

In order to remove ignorance, which is the root cause of suffering, one needs to understand what ignorance is. Ignorance is lack of knowledge of the past and future, lack of knowledge of the *Noble Path*, and lack of knowledge of *Dependent Origination*. Because of this ignorance, one has cravings and attachments and commits bad conduct or *akusala kamma* that brings unfortunate results, leading to rebirth in the suffering world.

Meditation at the supramundane level can help develop *Seven Enlightenment Factors (Bojjhaṅga)* : mindfulness, analysis of phenomena *(dhamma)*, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration of mind, and equanimity. The *Seven Enlightenment Factors* develop automatically along the *Noble Eightfold Path*. Through the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach, the *Seven Enlightenment Factors* can be developed more easily. This does not mean that I am already *Enlightened*; I am studying too. I have learned this from my own experience, from Luang Phor Wat Paknam, and a little bit from others, as well as from the Pali Scriptures.

By the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach, one can develop supernormal recollection of past existences and

see the future, especially cause and effect or the *Natural Law of Kamma*. This practice enables one to understand clearly the characteristics of compounds as well as the characteristics of the non-compound, which you rarely hear about elsewhere. Your understanding will become deeper and deeper, with higher and higher *Right Wisdom*. This can efficiently remove ignorance.

Anyone who can cut at least the first three fetters will become a *Noble One*. They are wrong views about compounds *(sakkāyadiṭṭhi)*, doubt about *Dhamma* practice *(vicikicchā)*, and wrong religious practices *(sīlabbataparāmāsa)*. As a result of eradicating these three fetters, one will truly understand the real nature of all compounds and hence not be bewildered by them. The Practitioner will attain full confidence about the *Path* that leads to *Emancipation (nibbāna)* and will no longer cling to mere rule and rituals (including superstitions and wrong practices for attaining *nibbāna*). When these three fetters are removed, one becomes a *Noble One* of the first stage *(sotāpanna)*.

The *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach provides very high levels of understanding, especially about the non-compound *(nibbāna)*. The approach appears in the scriptures, but is often overlooked. When you practice according to the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach, you will come to understand that the words *sabbe dhammā anattā* or "all compounds (conditioned phenomena) are non-self", do not include the non-compound (unconditioned phenomena) like *nibbāna*. Others may say that they do include the non-compound or *nibbāna*. In fact, this is not true. We will now examine relevant references from

the scriptures. You will see that *nibbāna* is non-compound in nature both according to the scriptures and according to verification by meditation, especially via the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach.

Nibbāna

Right Understanding of nibbāna can be viewed from three perspectives: *nibbāna* as a condition, as the possessor of the condition, and as a supra-mundane sphere.

Nibbāna as a Condition

Lord Buddha describes *nibbāna* as non-compound in *Nibbāna Sutta* III:

> *Atthi bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ, no ce taṃ, bhikkhave, abhavissa, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ...*
>
> Monks, there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded; for, monks, were it not for this unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded, an escape from here would not be known.
>
> But, monks, since there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded, therefore, an escape from the born, the become, the made and the compounded is known.

Elsewhere in the scriptures, Lord Buddha and the Noble Commentators describe four basic characteristics of *nibbāna*:

1. *Nibbāna* is void of defilements of any kind.

Lord Buddha said this in *Suttapiṭaka, Khuddaka-Nikāya Dhammapada Arahanta-Vagga*. This doesn't imply that *nibbāna* does not exist, but only says that *nibbāna* is void of defilements of all kinds. Lord Buddha refers to this as *suññata-vimokkha*. This means that it is free from all defilements such as sensual desire, hatred, delusion, etc. But, it exists.

2. *Nibbāna* is permanent.

In *Suttapiṭaka, Khuddaka-Nikāya, Itivuttaka*, Lord Buddha describes *Nibbāna as dhammasāraṃ*, meaning "very essential" or "very pure" and *niccaṃ*, meaning "permanent".

3. *Nibbāna* is not subject to change.

Lord Buddha says in *Dhammapadāṭṭhakathā, Arahanta-Vagga-Vaṇṇanā Sārīputta Subject* and elsewhere that *nibbāna* exists forever and does not pass away, there being no more death and rebirth. He describes it as *dhuvaṃ* which means "existing forever" and *tādi* which means "permanent" or stable or constant.

4. *Nibbāna* is supreme happiness.

Lord Buddha says specifically in *Suttapitaka, Khuddaka-Nikāya Dhammapada Sukha-Vagga Aññatara Upāsaka section: "nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ"* or *nibbāna* is supreme happiness.

In summary, *nibbāna* is a condition according to Lord Buddha's *Teaching*. It is existing void of defilements, permanent, not subject to change, and in supreme happiness. By the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach one comes to experience these conditions.

Nibbāna as Possessor of the Condition

Another aspect of *nibbāna* pertains to the possessor of the condition of *nibbāna*. Since *nibbāna* does exist, is permanent, and does not change, can these *Five Aggregates* possess the *nibbānic* condition? No. There must be something else that is non-compound and of the purest nature to manifest the state of *nibbāna*. Then, what is that? This is what we call *Dhammakāya*. *Dhammakāya* is not a new concept. It is referred to repeatedly throughout the scriptures. We shall cite a few of the most important references.

Lord Buddha said in the *Suttantapiṭaka, Dīgha-Nikāya, Pātika-vagga Aggañña-Sutta:*

> *tathāgatassa hetaṃ vāseṭṭhā adhivacanam*
> *Dhammakāyo itipi, Brahmakāyo itipi,*
> *Dhammabhūto itipi, Brahmabhūto itipi.*

This means *Dhammakāya* or *Brahmakāya* is my name. I am *Dhammakāya* (the purest, non-compound nature).

Dhammakāyo means a group of the purest. *Dhammabhūto* means the purest of the pure, or the purest element. *Brahmakāyo* means of supreme quality, not subject to change, and supremely blissful. This is why Lord Buddha is called *Dhammakāyo* and *Brahmabhūto*. These words refer to purity at its highest, not only for Lord Buddha's virtues, but also for the virtues of Buddha's disciples. When the scriptures mention *Dhammakāya* they also mean *Dhammakāyo*.

The following quotation from the Buddhist Book of Genesis translates *Dhammakāya* literally as "Norm-bodiness" and applies the term to a follower whose faith in Lord Buddha's teachings is so strong that he can be called a son of the Exalted or heir to the *Dhamma*.

> You, Vasettha, who, differing all of you in name, in clan and family, have gone forth from home into the homeless life may be asked: Who are ye? Then do ye reply: We be *Samanas* who follow him of the sons of the Sakiyans.
>
> He, Vasettha, whose faith in *Tathāgata* is settled, rooted, established and firm, a faith not to be dragged down by recluse or brahmin, or by *deva* or *Māra* or *Brahma* or anyone in the world, well may he say: I am a veritable son of the Exalted. One, born

from his mouth, born of the Norm *(Dhamma)*, created by the Norm, heir to the Norm. And why? Because, Vasettha, these are names tantamount to *Tathāgata*, belonging to the Norm, and again, belonging to the highest, and again, one with the Norm, and again, one with the Highest[10].

Dhammakāyo translates literally as having a Norm-body. Buddhaghosa says: Why is the *Tathāgato* said to have a Norm-body? Because, having devised the Three-*Piṭaka*-Buddha-Word with his mind, he practiced it in his speech. Therefore, his body, having Normness, *(Dhammatā)* is considered as the Norm and is so called. Because of this "Norm-bodiness", he is also said to have a *brahma* (supreme) body, for Norm is also called *brahma* in the sense of best, supreme, or excellent.

According to the commentary, *brahma* is used in the sense of the best *(seṭṭhatthena)*. Also, "norm-bodiness" is literally "norm-becoming" or "of the nature-of-the-Norm" *(Dhamma-sabhāvo)*. In brief, "Norm-bodiness" is *Dhammakāya*.

Another reference, *Suttapiṭaka Khuddaka-Nikāya Sarabhaṅga Thera*, stanza 365, states that all Buddhas, not only Sakyamuni Buddha, but all the former Buddhas as well, were *Dhammakāyas*. He who follows Lord Buddha's *Teachings* diligently also becomes a Buddha.

This is also indicated in the Verses of the Elders, I Theragāthā, page 50:

I, Sarabhanga, did not previously see the whole complete disease; this disease has (now) been seen by (me) doing the bidding of the one above the *devas*.

By the very road by which Vipassī went, by the very road by which (went) Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandha, Konāgamana, and Kassapa, by that straight path went Gotama.

The seven Buddhas are rid of craving, without grasping, plunging into annihilation, by whom, **having become righteousness, venerable**, this doctrine was taught.

In *Suttapiṭaka, Khuddaka-Nikāya, Apadāna Ekupasathavakka Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī Theriyapadāna*, when Prince Siddhattha's mother passed away, his foster mother Mahapajapati Gotami nursed him as a young prince. Later, she became a *bhikkhunī* or nun and subsequently became *Enlightened*. One day, she wanted to say farewell to Lord Buddha, for she knew that she was going to die soon. She said to Lord Buddha: "My *Dhammakāya* is the *Dhamma* that you helped me realize." Since she had nursed Prince Siddhatta and he had helped her realize the *Dhamma*, neither had to pay back the debt of *kamma* to the other. When she said "My *Dhammakāya* is the *Dhamma* you helped me to realize within me", it means that the word *Noble One* or "me" is *Dhammakāya*.

There are more references, but it would take quite a long time to relate all of them.

Nibbāna as a Supra-mundane Sphere

Finally, I would like to mention another aspect of *nibbāna, nibbāna* as the supra-mundane sphere where the *Dhammakāya* of Lord Buddha and other *Noble Ones* exist. From the Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part II, *Udāna*: Verses of Uplift, Chapter VIII *Pātali-gamiya, Nibbāna Sutta I.*

> Monks, there exists that condition *(nibbāna)* wherein there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air; wherein there is neither the sphere of infinite space nor the sphere of infinite consciousness, nor the sphere of nothingness, nor the sphere of neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness. There is neither this world nor a world beyond, nor both together; neither moon nor sun. Here, monks, I declare there is no coming to birth and no going (from life). Therein is no duration, no falling and no uprising. This is not something fixed, but it moves not on. It is not based on anything. This indeed is the end of *Ill.*

Nibbāna cannot be made an object of thought or sense, it is unimaginable, as said by Lord Buddha in *Nibbāna Sutta II*: *"Hard is the infinite to fathom; truth is no easy thing to see. Craving is pierced by the one who knows. For him who seeth, naught remains."* By practicing according to the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* method, the meditator can come to know *nibbāna* for himself.

Summary

Vipassanā practice aims at *Right Wisdom* regarding the *Five Hindrances, Five Aggregates, Four Noble Truths* and *Chain of Dependent Origination.* It consists of contemplation of the body, feelings, mental functions and phenomena *(dhamma).*

Vipassanā practice can be divided into two levels: mundane *Right Understanding* of compound phenomena *(saṅkhāra)* and supra-mundane contemplation of the non-compound *(visaṅkhāra)* which is *Dhammakāya* or *nibbāna. Vijjā Dhammakāya* is especially effective in helping meditators to know the non-compound directly through their own experience.

In conclusion, meditation by the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach involves both concentration *(samatha)* and insight *(vipassanā).* It leads to *Right Wisdom* through learning, knowing, seeing and feeling, that is, through direct experience. Both mundane *Right Understanding* and supra-mundane *Right Wisdom* can be attained. *Vijjā Dhammakāya samatha* concentration on the crystal light sphere *(ālokakasiṇa)* is one of the most efficient methods to tranquilize the mind. It helps the mind components to become easily one-pointed and can help develop super-normal knowledge such as recollection of former existences and direct experience of *kamma* at work. Intuitive understanding of the twelve-fold *Chain of Dependent Origination* efficiently helps to remove ignorance, the root cause of suffering.

Some may encounter difficulty in practice. Be assured that this is the most efficient way and leads directly to *nibbāna*. Just continue practicing until you reach the ultimate goal. May your life be free from suffering and problems forever.

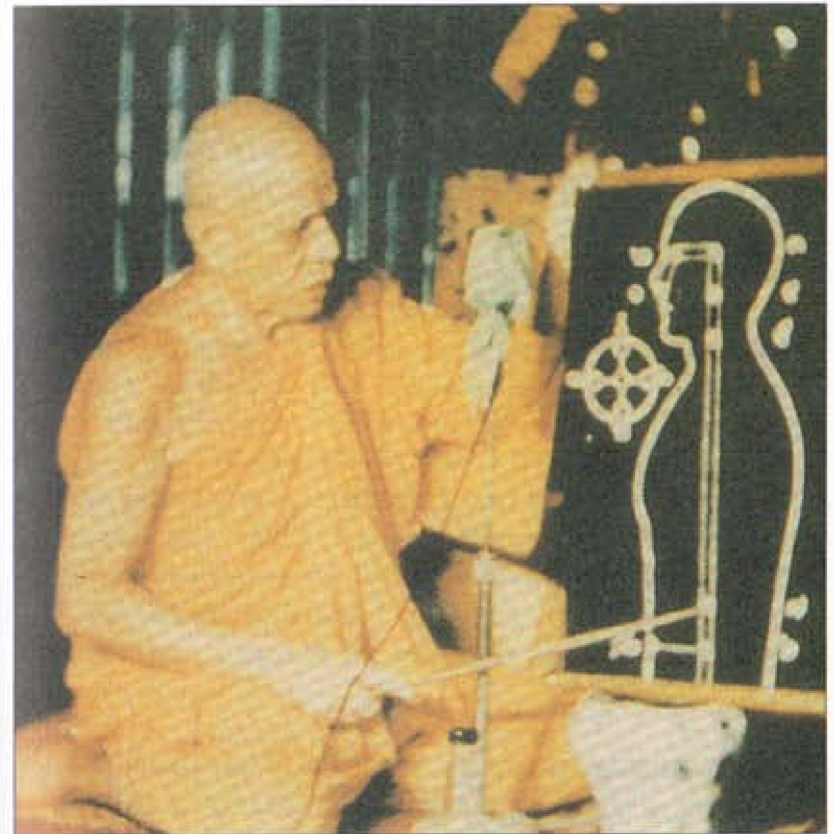


Figure 2
Luang Phor Sodh giving meditation instruction

Chapter V

BASIC VIJJA DHAMMAKAYA MEDITATION PRACTICE

It is not easy to attain the finer states of life, but it is also not so difficult as to be impossible. It requires peace of mind. Never become emotional or get agitated about anything. That is counter to good concentration of mind. You have to be cool and peaceful. Something good like *Dhamma* is high level. It always appears with the peaceful person, situation, and mind, never with an unpeaceful mind. The good things, the best things in life, will always come to the peaceful-minded person. If you cannot understand this, just let it pass for the moment. Listen to the rest of the instructions and do what you can.

Please sit in a regular meditation posture, cross-legged as seen in some images of the Buddha, with the right leg resting upon the left (Figure 3). The right hand rests on the left, palms turned upwards, right index finger just touching the left thumb. The body is upright and the mind fully alert. Take a deep breath and relax the body until you feel comfortable. Close your eyelids lightly, do not press them.



Figure 3
The Meditation Posture



Figure 4
The Object of Visualization
(parikamma-nimitta)

In basic *samatha vipassanā* practice, two aids are used:

- The repetitive word *(parikamma-bhāvanā)*
- The object of visualization *(parikamma-nimitta)*

The repetitive word is *sammā arahaṃ* and the object of visualization is a bright, clear, luminous sphere (Figure 4). Using these aids, we shall draw the mind inward along the path to the center of the body (Figure 5). Such concentration allows the mind components of vision, memory, thought and awareness to come together into oneness or *ekaggatāramaṇa.*

Position 1: The Nostril Aperture

Concentrate with your mind and visualize until there exists a vision of a bright and clear sphere. Let the sphere appear at your nostril, for ladies at the left nostril and for gentlemen at the right nostril. Fix your attention and rest your mind at the center of the sphere. This is a very bright and clear spot, the size of a grain of sand or needle point. Repeat the words *sammā arahaṃ* mentally three times to sustain the bright and clear sphere at the nostril. This is the first position at which your mind is focused.

Position 2: The Eye Socket

Next, mentally move the bright, clear sphere slowly up to rest at the eye socket—ladies to your left eye socket and gentlemen to your right eye socket. While you are slowly moving the sphere with your mind, fix your attention always at the small bright center of the

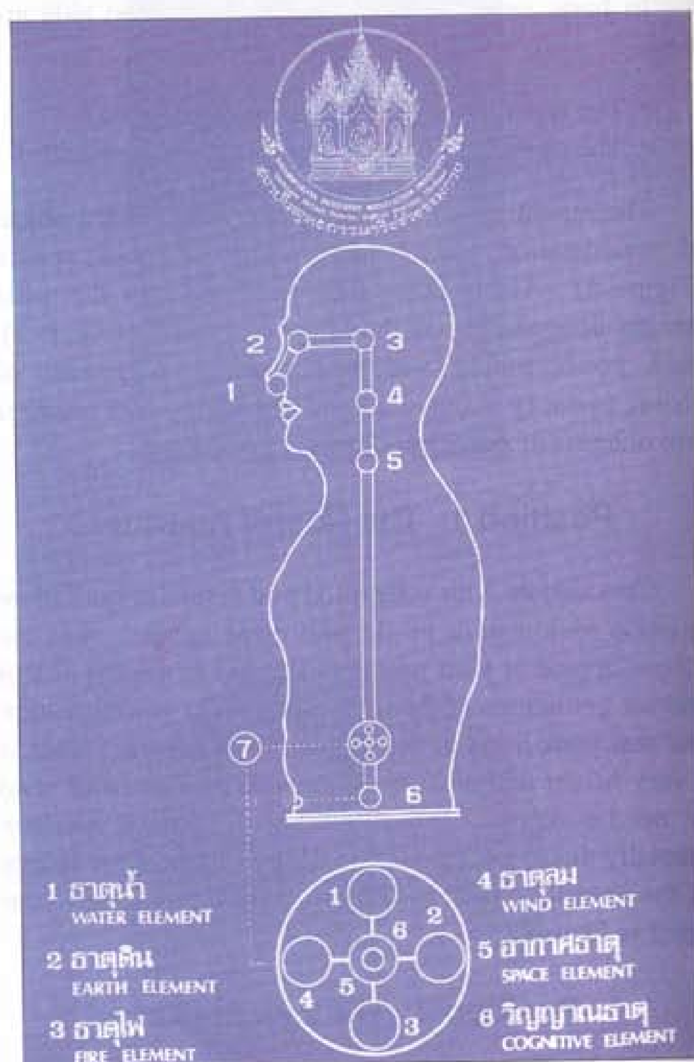


Figure 5
The Path to the Center of the Body

sphere. As the sphere rests at your eye socket, repeat mentally the words *sammā arahaṃ* three times. This is the second position.

Position 3: The Center of the Head

Mentally shift the sphere slowly to rest at the center of your head in line with the eyes. Keep the mind constantly fixed at the bright center of the luminous sphere. Repeat to yourself the words *sammā arahaṃ* three times to keep the sphere as bright and clear as you can, so that it shines and remains in that position. This is the third position.

Position 4: The Palate Terminus

Roll your eye-balls upward without lifting your head, so that your vision will turn back and inside. Meanwhile, mentally move the luminous and transparent sphere slowly and directly downward toward the palate. Recite to yourself the words *sammā arahaṃ* three times, to make the sphere even brighter and clearer, and hold it there. This is the fourth position.

Position 5: The Throat Aperture

Mentally move the bright, clear sphere slowly and directly downward to rest at the throat aperture. Repeat the words *sammā arahaṃ* to yourself three times, to keep the sphere bright and clear and hold it steady. This is the fifth position.

Position 6: Center of the Body

Next, slowly move the clear, luminous sphere directly downward, while keeping your attention focused on the bright nucleus at its center. Bring the sphere to rest at the center of the body, where the breath ends, even with the navel. This is the sixth position. Mentally recite the words *sammā arahaṃ* three times to keep the transparent sphere bright and luminous, and to hold it steady.

Position 7: Position of Sphere

Now, shift the sphere directly upward about two finger-widths above the navel. This is the center of the body and the seventh position. This is the mind's permanent resting place. Whenever a person or any other creature is born, dies, sleeps or wakens, the *Dhamma Sphere* which governs the body arises from this position. The *Dhamma Sphere* is composed of the *Vision Sphere*, the *Memory Sphere*, the *Thought Sphere*, and the *Awareness Sphere*. During meditation, the *Dhamma Sphere* appears to float from the sixth position up to the seventh position. The seventh position is also considered to be the center of the body.

Keep the bright, clear sphere resting at the center of the body in the seventh position. Mentally recite the words *sammā arahaṃ* continuously to keep the sphere still and make it become brighter and clearer. Concentrate so that the sphere shines continuously. Focus your mind at the bright center of the sphere, and at the bright center of each successive sphere that emerges.

Pay no attention to any external sensation. Let your mind delve deeper and deeper into the successive centers as you recite *sammā arahaṃ*, the *parikamma-bhāvanā*. Even if ants are climbing all over you or mosquitoes are flying all around, pay no heed. Don't even pay attention to following the breath.

Bring your mind to rest at the center of the center, by envisioning a bright sphere. Your mind should rest steadily and continuously at the center of the sphere. Do not force the mind too strongly. Over exerting the mind will cause a shift in your meditation and the mind will not be able to see.

Do not use your physical eyes to focus on the vision. The practice is only for your mind. Gently train your mind to see a bright, clear, steady sphere. Mentally observe and focus on the bright clear center. Concentrate on the center of each consecutive sphere that emerges from the preceding one. Do not wander to the left, right, front, rear, top or bottom. Always focus on the center of each new sphere which emerges from the bright shining center. Rest the mind there.

As the mind components of vision, memory, thought and awareness are drawn into oneness, they come to rest at the same center of the body. The meditator will notice a gradual decrease in response to external sensations. With proper concentration, the mind will then fall back to the sixth position.

Then, a bright, clear sphere will emerge at the seventh position. The sphere may be the size of an egg yolk.

Smaller ones may look like a star in the sky. Large spheres may be as big as the sun or the moon. This is the sphere of *paṭhama-magga*, the preliminary sign of concentration. It is the first step towards the path *(magga)*, fruit *(phala)*, and *nibbāna*. This is also known as the *Dhamma Sphere*, which makes the human body possible.

When this luminous and clear sphere appears, do not be overjoyed or over-react. If you do, the concentration *(samādhi)* could loosen and the sphere might disappear. Keep your mind evenly calm in equanimity *(upekkhā)*. Hold the mind still, without repeating the *parikamma-bhāvanā (sammā arahaṃ)*. Once the sphere of *paṭhama-magga* is perceived, there is no need to continue this mental recitation.

Concentrate the mind at the small, luminous, clear center of the *paṭhama-magga* sphere. Five smaller spheres will appear within this sphere. One is concentric at the center. The others are in front, at the right, left, and behind, respectively (Figure 6).

These small spheres are the refined centers of the basic elements. In front is the water element, controlling fluids in bodily functions. To the right is the earth element, controlling solid parts. To the back lies the fire element dealing with the body's temperature and heat. To the left is the wind element, controlling internal movements of gases. At the center is the space element, controlling the various gaps within the body. In the center of the space element is the cognitive element or *viññāṇadhātu* which controls consciousness. Four thin

bright, clear lines connect each of the circumferential spheres to the central sphere.

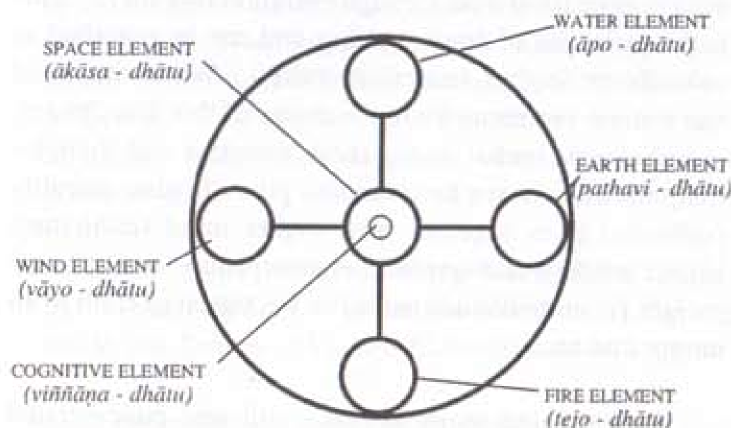


Figure 6
The Sphere at the Center of the Body and the Elements

The *paṭhama-magga* sphere will appear as reflecting the physical, verbal and mental purification of the meditator. When the mind is at rest, concentrated at the seventh position, it allows all six refined elements to come into unison at this seventh position, the center, where the original *dhātu-dhamma* was generated.

Once this *paṭhama-magga* sphere can be observed, concentrate further at the center of the clear, luminous sphere. When the mind is still and in the right mode,

the center will expand, giving rise in its place to a new, more luminous, clear and refined sphere of moral conduct *(sīla)*. Through this sphere, we can refine physical, verbal and mental deeds more efficiently and on a deeper level than through common morality. This is the pure *sīla* of *kammaṭṭhāna* and can be regarded as *adhisīla* or higher (purer) morality. When the mind can remain permanently in the center of this *Sīla Sphere*, the physical, verbal and mental activities and their intentions will always be clean and pure. Higher morality *(adhisīla)* goes together with higher mind *(adhicitta)*, higher wisdom *(adhipaññā)*, emancipation *(vimutti)*, and insight *(vimutti-ñāṇadassana)* or the vision of truth from emancipation.

As the mind stays at rest, still and concentrated further into the center of the sphere of *sīla*, and in the right mode, the center of the sphere will keep on expanding and in its place will appear a new, more luminous, clear and refined sphere of *samādhi*. This further refines physical, verbal and mental activities. When the mind rests still and deep in *samādhi* at this stage, it will destroy the *Five Hindrances* to the attainment of goodness: lust, malice, anxiety, sloth and doubt about practice. This is the commencement of the first state of absorption *(paṭhama-jhāna)*. The mind is now gentle enough for insight practice *(vipassanā)* to develop the wisdom *(paññā)* to know correctly and clearly the *Truth of Dhamma*. Hence, it is called the *adhicitta* or higher mind.

Concentrate further and rest still at the center of the center of the *Sphere of Samādhi*. With the mind at rest, still, and in the right mode, the previous center will

expand and a new, more luminous, clear *Sphere of Paññā* will appear in its place.

Similarly, with the mind resting still, concentrated at the center of the *Paññā Sphere*, the *Sphere of Vimutti* (emancipation) emerges. Let the mind adhere to the center of the *Vimutti Sphere*, keeping it always luminous and clear. This will destroy the crude desires belonging to human beings such as greed, vengeance and wrong point-of-view.

Hold your mind at rest in the center of the center of the *Vimutti Sphere*. When the mind is in the right mode, the *Sphere of Vimutti-Ñāṇadassana* will appear.

Concentrate the mind further, resting still at the center of the center of the *Vimutti-Ñāṇadassana Sphere*. With the right mode of mind, the center will expand and a *Refined Human Form* or *Panīta-Manussakāya* will emerge from this center (Figure 7b). The *Refined Human Form* appears identical to the meditator, but is finer than the ordinary form. It sits in the regular meditation posture, facing the same direction as the meditator. In some cases, a clear crystal Buddha appears with a crown of budding lotus. The Buddha is beautiful, pure, and perfect. This is *Dhammakāya*.

Whatever refined form *(panīta-kāya)* is observed, concentrate with all your mind to assume or become such a form *(kāya)*. As the centers of all *kāya*s are concentric, the mind is now right at the center of the new *kāya*. Concentrate until both the sphere and the *kāya* are bright and clear. The mind now rests still at the center of the



Figure 7a: *Manussakāya*
Crude Human Body

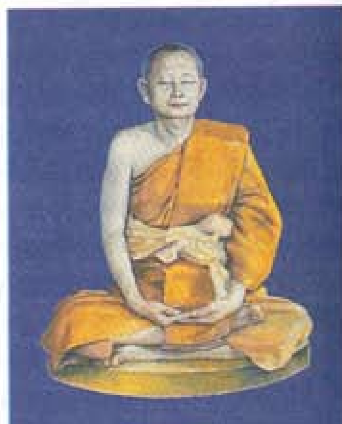


Figure 7b: *Panīta Manussakāya*
Refined Human Body



Figure 7c: *Dibbakāya Figure*
Crude Celestial Body



7d: *Panīta Dibbakāya*
Refined Celestial Body



Figure 7e: *Rūpabrahmakāya*
Crude Form Brahman Body

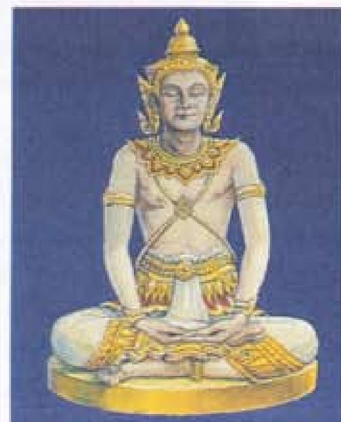


Figure 7f: *Panīta Rūpabrahmakāya*
Refined Form Brahman Body



Figure 7g: *Arūpabrahmakāya*
Crude Formless Brahman Body



Figure 7h: *Panīta Arūpabrahmakāya*
Refined Formless Brahman Body

nucleus of the new sphere, so that it is all bright and clear. As new spheres are observed, proceed in the same manner as before through the new spheres of *sīla, samādhi, paññā, vimutti, and vimutti-ñāṇadassana.*

The mind now rests still at the center of the small bright nucleus of the sphere of *vimutti-ñānadassana*. Then the nucleus will expand and a new refined form *(panīta-kāya)* will be observed. *Dibbakāya* arises (Figure 7c). When the refined body, *panīta-dibbakāya* (Figure 7d) arises, detach all your feeling from the present body to assume or become the newly refined one. Concentrate all your attention at the center until the spheres of *dhamma, sīla, samādhi, paññā, vimutti,* and *vimutti-ñāṇadassana* are observed successively.

Dhammakāya-Gotrabhū

Continue to repeat the same procedure for further mental purification through subsequent spheres and *kāyas*. Whenever there rises a more refined body, detach your feeling from the present body and assume or become the new refined one. Concentrate your attention at the center until the spheres of *dhamma, sīla, samādhi, paññā, vimutti, and vimutti-ñāṇadassana* are observed.

The *rūpabrahmakāya* (Figure 7e) appears next, then *panīta-rūpabrahmakāya* (Figure 7f). Next comes *arūpabrahmakāya* (Figure 7g), followed by *panīta-arūpabrahmakāya* (Figure 7h). Finally, *Dhammakāya-Gotrabhū* (i.e., wisdom through which a *Noble State* is developed) is attained and seen (Figure 8). The lapwidth, height and sphere diameter are each nine meters (10 yards).



Figure 8
Dhammakāya Gotrabhū

Dhammakāyas appear like diamond Buddha statues, crowned with a budding lotus. They are luminous, radiant and as clear as a pure, perfect, first-rate diamond. As you continue to concentrate at the center of the center, more and more refined, purer and purer, larger and larger *Dhammakāyas* will be observed. Follow the same procedure described for previous *kāyas*, concentrating through successive spheres until the next body appears. The path towards ultimate release is summarized in Figure 9. The following *Dhammakāyas* will be attained:

- *Dhammakāya Gotrabhū* (Noble-state Wisdom) and then a *Refined Dhammakāya Gotrabhū* whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter are all nine meters or more.

- A *Dhammakāya Sotā panna* (Stream-winner) and then a *Refined Dhammakāya Sotā panna* whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter are ten meters or more.

- A *Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmī* (Once-returner) and then a *Refined Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmī* whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter are twenty meters or more.

- A *Dhammakāya Anāgāmī* (Non-returner) and then a *Refined Dhammakāya Anāgāmī* whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter measure up to thirty meters or more.

- A *Dhammakāya Arahatta* (Perfect One) and then à *Refined Dhammakāya Arahatta* whose lap-width, height and sphere diameter extend up to forty meters or more.

With all of your mind, become the more and more refined *Dhammakāya Arahatta*. Rest your mind and keep it still, right at the center of the sphere of the most refined *Dhammakāya Arahatta* that you can attain. Hold steady until you reach *āyatana nibbāna*, the place or sphere where the most refined *Dhammakāya Arahatta* can exist in the highest perfection. This is where the *arahantas* and Lord Buddhas whose *Five Aggregates* or *khandhas* have passed away exist forever. It is also called *anupādisesa-nibbāna* or *nibbāna* without residue.

One who has attained *Dhammakāya* has developed mindful contemplation of physical body, feelings, mental

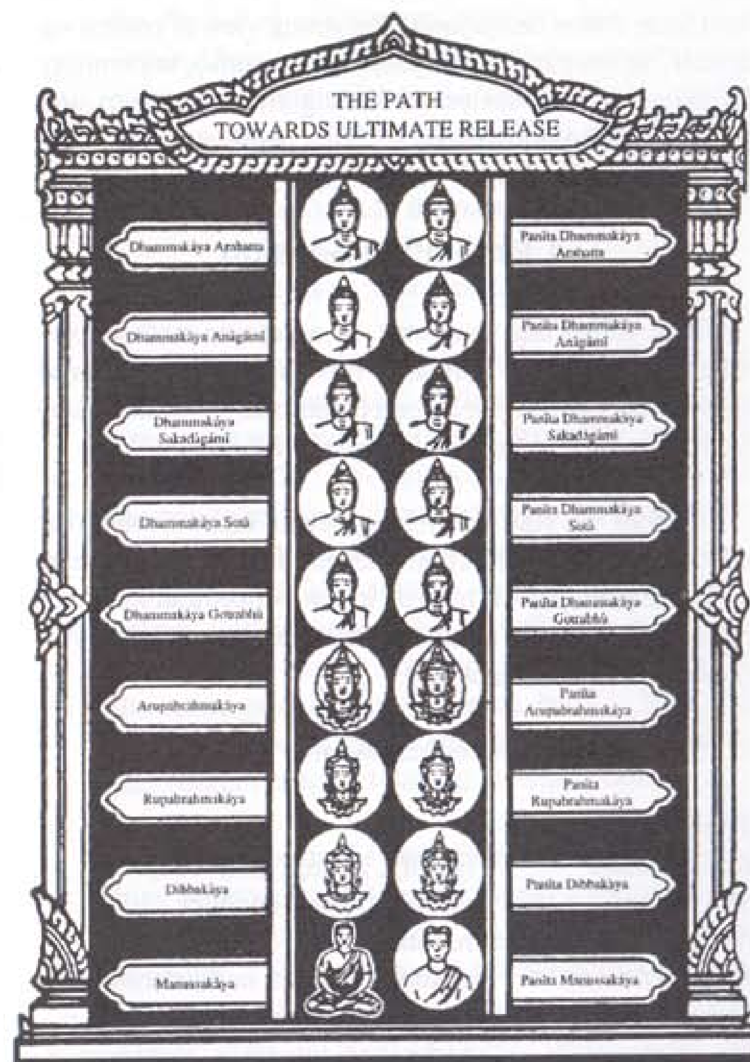


Figure 9
The Path Towards Ultimate Release

functions and phenomena *(dhamma)*. He or she can cut at least three fetters *(saṁyojana)*: the wrong view of perceiving a "self" in the *Five Khandhas (sakkāyadiṭṭhi)*, uncertainty *(vicikicchā)*, and useless or wrong ritual practices and vows *(sīlabbataparāmāsa)*. This meditator can then become a *Noble One*.

A Meditation Session

The following transcript of a session with experienced meditators indicates how *samatha-vipassanā* meditation can be used for contemplation of the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Noble Eightfold Path*.

Before we start meditating, let us make a wish that all our spiritual perfections accumulated from the past up to the present will help us in our concentration of our minds and aid us to attain the Path *(magga)* and the Fruit *(phala)* at this moment.

The ten spiritual perfections are:

The Perfection of...	
Dāna Pāramī	charity, giving, generosity.
Sīla Pāramī	morality, good conduct.
Nekkhamma Pāramī	renunciation.
Paññā Pāramī	wisdom, insight, understanding.
Viriya Pāramī	endeavor, energy, effort.
Khanti Pāramī	endurance, tolerance, forbearance.
Sacca Pāramī	truthfulness.
Adhiṭṭhāna Pāramī	resolution, self-determination
Mettā Pāramī	loving-kindness, friendliness.
Upekkhā Pāramī	equanimity.

May all our accumulated perfections, together with the virtues of our parents, teachers, preceptors, and the *Triple Gem*, help us to be mindful and remove the five hindrances, attain *Dhamma* and reach the enlightened *Dhammakāya*. When making this request, our mind will be happy and delighted by all the good meritorious deeds we have done in the past up to the present.

And now let us start meditation.

Focus your attention to the center of the sphere at the center of the body. Whenever the real nucleus appears, rest your mind gently at its center until the center expands itself. Then fix your attention at the center of the newly refined sphere and when the four components of your mind are perfectly concentrated, the center will expand itself and another brighter and more refined sphere will appear. Go on with this procedure until your refined human body appears. It will be sitting in the same position as the crude body. Now focus all your attention at the center of the refined human body and forget completely about the crude one.

When the body and sphere are more refined, you may observe that there will appear a rounded seat under the refined human body. Just acknowledge it, don't do anything. When your mind is perfectly concentrated at the center of the refined human body, the center will expand itself. Larger and larger bodies, more and more refined, will appear accordingly. Following the *Refined Human Body* you will see and become the *Celestial Body*, then the *Refined Celestial Body*, about double the size of the *Refined Human Body*. Then the *Brahman*

Body and the *Refined Brahman Body*, about double the size of the *Celestial Body*. Followed by the *Formless Brahman Body* and the refined *Formless Brahman Body*, which again will be double the size of the *Brahman Body*.

When you stop still at the center of the refined formless Brahman body, the center will expand itself and *Dhammakāya* will appear. The standard size of the *Dhammakāya* is about nine meters in width and height, and it looks like a very brilliant and refined Buddha image. Now stop still at the center of the *Dhammakāya* and there will appear larger and larger, more refined and purer *Dhammakāyas*. Each time, become that newly refined *Dhammakāya* and let your mind rest at its center. Go on purifying yourself and be mindful at the center of the purest body and mind.

(10-15 minutes of silence)

Stop still at the center of the sphere at the center of the *Crude Human Body (paṭhama-magga)*. You may observe that at the center of the *dhamma-sphere*, at the center of the human body, there will exist a *Sphere of Suffering*, and at its center you will see the *Sphere of Rebirth*. It will be bright, pure and transparent. We received this sphere when we were born.

At the center of the *Birth-Sphere* you will find the *Sphere of Old Age*. It looks black. The size depends upon your age. The older you are, the bigger the sphere. At the center of the *Old-Age-Sphere* a sick person will have a sphere as black as charcoal called the *Sphere of*

Sickness. At the center of that sphere, a very black and brilliant sphere will appear. This is the *Sphere of Death*. It will appear at the moment a sick person is destined to die.

(The explanation in this paragraph was given after the meditation session.) When a person dies, all the external bodies starting with the refined human body will detach from the center of the crude body and seek rebirth right away. For example, if a sphere leaves with a human being's *dhamma* (merit) level, that being will be reborn in the human world. The sphere of that person will then appear at the center of the future father. Within seven days, when the future parents have intercourse and the three spheres are close together both physically and mentally, the sphere of the child-to-be will leave the father, following a specific path up through the father's body. If it is a male, the sphere will leave the father through his right nostril. It will then enter the mother through her right nostril and finally rest at the center of her womb. If it is female, the path will be through the left nostrils of both parents.

At the center of the *Sphere of Suffering* there will exist a *Sphere of Cause of Suffering* which is comprised of three black spheres. The first is the *Sphere of Sensual Feeling or Passion*, the second is the *Sphere of the Desire to Become* and the third is the *Sphere of Desire Not to Become*. These three spheres of cravings are situated at the center of the center of each other.

When you stop still at the very center of the *Sphere of Cause of Suffering*, the center will expand itself and the

Sphere of Extinction of Suffering will appear, very bright and refined. The size will be about a foot in diameter, possibly even larger. At the center of this sphere you will find the *Sphere of Magga*, comprised of the *Sphere of Sīla* (morality), the *Sphere of Samādhi* (concentration), and the *Sphere of Paññā* (wisdom).

When concentrating at the center of the *Sphere of Sīla*, three more refined spheres are encountered, namely, the Spheres of *Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood.*

Also, the second main sphere, the *Sphere of Samādhi*, is comprised of three brighter spheres which are the *Sphere of Right Effort*, the *Sphere of Right Mindfulness*, and the *Sphere of Right Concentration.*

The last of the three main spheres, the *Sphere of Paññā,* contains two spheres, namely the spheres of *Right Thought* and *Right Intention.*

Eight spheres all together, each at the center of the center of one another. They are called the spheres of the *Noble Eightfold Path.*

The spheres of the *Four Noble Truths* exist at the center of all worldly bodies from the crude body till the refined *Formless Brahman Body*. One should contemplate either external or internal (crude or refined) *dhamma* (i.e. the *Four Noble Truths* of all the crude and refined bodies *(Human Body, Celestial body, Brahman Body and Formless Brahman Body).*

Of course, the *Dhammakāya* doesn't have a *Sphere of Suffering or Sphere of Cause of Suffering.* It has only the *Sphere of Nirodha* (Extinction of Suffering) and the *Sphere of Magga*, of which the diameter will be equal to the height and width of the *Dhammakāya.*

Whenever the concentration of mind is perfect enough, at least up to the first level of *jhāna*, the *Right Wisdom* is present, the perfect *Noble Eightfold Path* can remove at least three fetters or bondages (bindings to existence). These three so-called lower fetters are:

- False view of compound things, attachments to aggregates.
- Doubt in Buddhist practice.
- Adherence to rules and rituals, or malpractice.

When these three bindings have been removed, the body of the *Sotā Dhammakāya* will appear and be followed by more and more refined *Dhammakāyas.* There will then be *ñāṇadassana, Enlightened Vision.* You will then become a noble person.

So, whenever you are purifying yourself by stopping still at the center of the center, you are getting more and more mindful and thus able to purify your mind and all elements from any kind of passion, from the crude up to the subtle defilements, until you reach and become *Dhammakāya Gotrabhū* and *Noble Dhammakāya* according to your attainment level.

(10-15 minutes of silence)

Let your mind stop still at the center of the sphere at the center of your body, and then let us make a wish before completing this meditation session. Let us request Lord Buddha to bless all of us to live a happy and prosperous life without problems and suffering. Let's extend our loving-kindness and share our merit accumulated from the past up to the present with all world beings.

Nibbāna paccayo hotu
May these be the means whereby
Nibbāna is ultimately attained.

Summary

For meditation, sit cross-legged and make your mind peaceful and fully alert, closing the eyes lightly. We use two aids: the repetitive word *sammā arahaṃ* and the object of visualization, the light sphere. Beginning meditators should visualize a sphere at the nostril and bring it through the seven positions to the center of the body, repeating *sammā arahaṃ* to keep it bright and clear.

When the mind is concentrated, the *Dhamma Sphere* will arise at the seventh position. In it you can see the spheres of the elements. With concentration at the center of the sphere of consciousness, the sphere of *sīla* will arise, then the spheres of *samādhi, paññā, vimutti* and *vimutti-ñāṇadassana* (emancipation).

With concentration, the refined human form appears, then more and more refined body-minds. The meditator becomes each, by concentrating at the center of the center. Eventually the practitioner becomes *Dhammakāya Gotrabhū, Noble State Wisdom*. Then more *Dhammakāya* follow, up to *Dhammakāya Arahatta*. By holding steady at the center, the meditator can see *āyatana nibbāna* where Lord Buddha and the *arahantas* exist forever.

Advanced meditators can see and contemplate the spheres of *Suffering, Old Age, Sickness* and *Death*, the spheres of *Cause of Suffering*, and the spheres of the *Noble Eightfold Path* which lead to the extinction of suffering. With practice, the meditator can cut the fetters and become a *Noble One*.

Chapter VI

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This chapter summarizes conversations which serve to clarify *Dhammakāya* practice. It consists of five parts:

- Questions posed in Malaysia following the original lectures.
- An interview of Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai by a practicing meditator.
- Questions posed by a foreign monk.
- A foreign monk's experience.
- Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo and Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram.

Questions Posed in Malaysia

The following questions were posed to the Venerable Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai by those who attended the three-day series of *Dhamma* talks at the Buddhist Vihāra, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Q1. Where is the center part of the body?

A1. The way to locate the center part of your body is to imagine two transparent strings or lines. One line passes from the front to the back, about an

inch above the navel level. Visualize that line. The second line passes from the middle of the right side to the left. Now you can see the intersection of the two lines. That is the center of your body, about two finger-breadths or an inch above the navel level.

Q2. *Do you see the bright sphere up here, near the eyes, or down here, at the center of your body?*

A2. It should be at the center of your body. This is the most proper place. I know that many people may see the bright sphere on the forehead or outside. Try to bring it in to the center of your body. The technique for bringing your mind in is to roll your eyes upwards a little bit while closing your eyelids. This helps the mind components which are wandering outside to go backwards and vertically downwards, coming to rest at the center of your body. Try it. Roll your eyes upwards and imagine the center of your body, then the bright sphere will appear there.

Q3. *Could you please tell that gentleman not to take photographs during the meditation session. The flashes distract my concentration.*

A3. That can be a problem, but you must learn through experience to separate your mind from the outside environment. Even if the fan goes tick, tick... or you meet other disturbances, don't worry about them. Don't pay any attention to them. When you pay attention to your object of concentration

and nothing else, your mind will be free and will stop still in the proper place. It is your mind that you wish to train. Try it.

Q4. *I did not actually see the bright sphere when I closed my eyes. But, when I was breathing in and out I was concentrating on the breath and then I could get a white light. What do you think about this?*

A4. That's good. This method can also incorporate *ānāpānasati*. *Ānāpānasati* is mindfulness of breathing, without following the breath. Don't follow the breath, but be mindful of it at either of several fixed points the breath passes, like at the nostril aperture, the center of the chest, or at the center of your body. If you do *ānāpānasati* properly, you will find your breathing becomes shallower and shallower, more and more refined. Eventually, it will stop still at the center of your body and you will see a very bright sphere there. This is the objective of *ānāpānasati* in the *Dhammakāya* approach. The mind will stop naturally, by itself. Then, you have come close to the right track. When you observe breathing, your mind will become better and better concentrated, even though your mind has not yet stopped still at the center. When your mind stops at the center of your body, you will see the light sphere there. Your mind should be still there. Try again.

If you are used to *ānāpānasati* practice, just imagine a sphere at the center of your body and

be mindful of it. When you breathe in and out, put your mindfulness there. Observe your breath passing through the sphere. Then, you will see the sphere getting clearer and clearer. When your mind stops still at the center of the sphere, you will find light. You will appear not to be breathing because the breath has become very shallow and refined. When your mind stops still, you will see a very bright sphere or nucleus as your object. Be mindful there.

Q5. *Just now, when you said to imagine the sphere, I couldn't really see or visualize the sphere. What should I do?*

A5. Try more. This is the first time you are trying to train the mind which has been wandering outside ever since your were born. You require a longer time to train it to stay at the center. Don't be over eager to see something. When a light appears, you may press your mind hard to see a sharp image of a sphere. If so, the light may disappear. Just relax. Don't pay attention to anything but the center of the object of concentration. Don't be too eager, just visualize the sphere. Stop still at the center of the center, repeating the words *sammā arahaṃ*. Try to practice today before going to bed or whenever you can. You can practice in any position: walking, sitting, eyes opened or closed, it doesn't matter. Just bring your mind into the center of your body. This is very meritorious. Why? When your mind wanders outside, it will contact and attach to

worldly objects you like, or feel aversion towards the objects you dislike. That will cause passion to arise in the form of craving, greed, ill will, or delusion. So, if you bring your mind inside, even for a second, it is very meritorious because the mind stops unattached to any worldly object. Thus, your mind will become purer and purer. Try to do it everyday, every time you feel free to do so, in any position and at any place.

Q6. *Reverend, when you see the sphere, isn't it supposed to be round? I see something which looks oblong.*

A6. Yes, it may be so, but do not be bothered at all. If you stop still at the center (a very transparent spot), you see *Dhamma*. The *Dhamma sphere* enlarges from that spot and becomes a sphere anyway.

Q7. *You said to imagine the center of the sphere at the nose aperture, then the eye socket, then the center of the head. Why those positions?*

A7. Luang Phor Wat Paknam, who originally taught the *Dhammakāya* approach during his time, discovered that the mind of a person functions in this way when he or she is about to die, to fall asleep, to wake up, or to be reborn. The old mind at the center of the *Dhamma sphere* in the seventh position will drop to the sixth position, in line with the navel. Then, the new mind of the new body (which depends on *kamma*) will appear and

rest at the seventh position. That is why we call the center of the body the permanent place of the mind.

When exiting, the mind drops to the sixth place, then fifth, fourth, third, second, and first. Then, out it goes. Similarly, the mind enters by the same path. So, for the first meditation session, we are instructed by Luang Phor Wat Paknam to teach all students to know the path along which the minds gets in and out. This occurs when a person dies, is reborn, falls asleep, or awakens, or even during other activities not mentioned here.

This initial technique is for you to know how the mind gets in and out. Afterwards, for subsequent meditation sessions, we will advise you to immediately concentrate at the center of the body. Why? Within the physical body, more and more refined bodies exist along with *Dhamma* and mind. As you know, the mind components are feelings *(vedanā)*, perception *(saññā)*, formations *(saṅkhāra)*, and consciousness *(viññāṇa)*. These elements develop to be the four mind components: the *Sphere of Vision*, the *Sphere of Memory*, the *Sphere of Thought*, and the *Sphere of Awareness*. All these are naturally positioned at the center of the body.

Here, at the center of the body is where you can contemplate the four *Foundations of Mindfulness* or *satipaṭṭhānas*. These *satipaṭṭhānas* were cited by the Buddha as "the only way" to enlightenment, regardless of which approach you take. In *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, one is mindful of and contemplates external and internal physical bodies, feelings, mental functions, and phenomena *(dhamma)*. This is done most efficiently at the center of the body, through the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach. This is because all the more and more refined bodies, minds and phenomena *(dhamma)* inside us are located at the center of each other.

When you stop still, your mind becomes purer and purer. You can reach more and more refined *Dhamma* and purer and purer minds and bodies until you reach the purest *Dhammakāya*. *Dhammakāya* is the purest state of mind and has different characteristics from *saṅkhāra* or compound nature. Moreover, as your mind becomes purer and purer by stopping still at the center of the center of purer and purer *Dhamma*, mind and bodies, what happens? Nothing outside can disturb you.

An Interview

An interview with Phra Ajahn Sermchai Jayamanggalo conducted by John Ladalski at Wat Meh Liew, Kuala Lumpur, on Friday August 3, 1990.

Q1. Is it possible to become a Noble One during meditation and then return to become an ordinary layman (puthujjana) again on coming out of meditation?

A1. Oh no, that is not possible.

Q2. What is a "puthujjana"

A2. A layman who is thick with passion. If one becomes a *Noble One*, he cannot fall back to lower existences than the human world. But, if one is just a *Dhammakāya* without cutting the fetters, one can fall back when one does wrong.

Q3. So, even though he does Dhammakāya Meditation, but hasn't reached the "Stream-Enterer" stage yet by getting rid of the three fetters, he can come down?

A3. That's right. It is as simple as that.

Q4. How long does it take to attain nibbāna?

A4. It is not possible to tell how long.

Q5. How long does it take to see the crystal ball or paṭhama-magga?

A5. It depends upon each person's capability. There are many factors. First, is former *kusala kamma* (meritorious deeds); second, present *kusala kamma* from trying to follow the Master's teachings. For example, meditators have to accept the precepts and try to keep mindful of the sphere by repeating the words *sammā arahaṃ*. Practice it often. Don't let wrong emotions such as losing your temper develop in the mind. Try to calm the

mind. Be mindful all the time and practice often, using the right method.

Q6. So, if you attend the fifteen-day retreat in Rajburi, what is the possibility of being successful in seeing the crystal ball?

A6. I would say a third of the participants are successful, if they complete the fifteen days. At least you can more or less see the sphere.

Q7. Can we say that a longer time, say a month, would increase the success rate to 50%?

A7. No, I cannot say that. It may be 40% or even less, because usually fifteen days is the maximum for a person to continue exerting his or her whole effort. Longer than that and the meditator might become bored. You need a rest.

Q8. It cannot be like three months?

A8. Seriously, it doesn't help much. It should be about fifteen days. After that, relax a little bit, then proceed again. In that way you'll have progress.

Q9. What is the proper time to meditate during the day?

A9. Some people say in the morning at 3:00, 4:00, or 5:00 am, and some say 9:00 or 10:00 am. Afternoon is not very good. It becomes good again around 7:00, 8:00 , 9:00 or 10:00 pm.

Q10. How about before you go to sleep?

A10. Yes. But for me, as I see it, it depends upon one's physical fitness and environment. If you feel exhausted or tired, take a rest. Afterwards, when you can find the proper conditions such as a quiet place, good weather and free time, meditation can be very helpful at anytime. It depends upon how you feel. The best way is to try to do as much as you can without forcing it too much. Don't be too eager.

Sometimes you might sit under a tree in good weather for only a couple of minutes and you can see the sphere! Some people can see it while walking along, not sitting formally. Like me, I see the sphere on the bus and see Dhammakāya during walking. When your merit becomes full, you can see it. When your mind becomes tranquil, peaceful and still, you can also see it right away because the mind becomes perfectly concentrated.

Q11. Is there a correlation? If you do more merit, will you be more calm?

A11. Happy. You will be more happy.

Q12. Where does this happiness come from? From the kamma of doing merit?

A12. It comes two ways. Happiness can be brought about by sense objects and by doing good kamma which give the "right" result, a happy and peaceful mind.

Q13. How long should a meditation session be? How many minutes?

A13. I would recommend about thirty minutes for beginners. After you get used to it, it can be more and more until about an hour. If one is very good, two hours doesn't matter. Sometimes when I am invited to bless a Buddha statue I meditate two hours. Normally, I will practice only one hour.

Q14. Did you ever do it for a very long time, say three, four or five hours?

A14. No, I have not done it that way. I change my position by walking or in other ways. Yes, walking, but I do not have to walk according to a rigorous format. I just take it easy.

Q15. Does Māra, that is Devaputta Māra, ever affect you or anybody who is especially transmitting or spreading the Dhamma through Dhammakāya Meditation? Does that affect people like some negative thing would happen more as a result of Māra? Does he affect or attack?

A15. He attacks any person who does good.

Q16. Is it more so for you?

A16. They try, but as you concentrate at the center of your body, your mind will become purer and brighter. Most of the Māra cannot come close

and cannot attack. I wouldn't talk too much because sometimes when you talk about this, it is like a challenge to Māra. Māra is a bad thing which is like a bad person. If we talk about a bad person, even worse may befall us, but anyway I will talk about this.

Q17. Did you have any experience like that?

A17. Māra never got close to me.

Q18. Should one feel discouraged on hearing of another's progress in their meditation? How should we act to that situation?

A18. Make your mind neutral. Don't be interested in anything outside yourself. Lord Buddha taught us not to pay attention to another's activities. Just check your own activities.

Q19. In Majjhima Nikāya M.ii 37-44, it is said that an evil person may also be able to practice meditation and reach the eighth absorption level or jhāna, is that true?

A19. An evil person?

Q20. Can a person who attained the eighth jhāna level and who has psychic powers still have evil intentions? Can he be not an arahanta, but an evil person with Dhammakāya. Can he do evil things? Is that possible?

A20. As long as one's mind is *Dhammakāya*, he or she won't do anything wrong. One will be very good. But, at anytime when the mind is out of the center or the *Dhammakāya* is gone, he or she can be evil. Even for just a second the mind can be in and out. If you become evil and have evil in mind, the *Dhammakāya* will be gone. It takes a long time until your mind is pure enough to bring the *Dhammakāya* back again. But, no one knows this problem and somebody says "Oh, this person is a *Dhammakāya*". In fact, he is not one any longer.

Q21. What about Devadatta, did he ever reach Dhammakāya? He had great psychic powers.

A21. Yes, because of *samatha* practice he reached *Dhammakāya*. But, he was not a *Noble Person* yet. The moment he had an evil mind like thinking of going against the Buddha, the *Dhammakāya* disappeared instantly and he lost all his powers.

Q22. Didn't he possess power for a while after that?

A22. Yes, the misdeed was not bad enough. For example, he had the power to influence the Prince's mind when he convinced Prince Ajatasattu to be on his side. But, by merely thinking about destroying or attacking Lord Buddha, all the power was gone.

Q23. Can an evil person be at the eighth jhāna?

A23. Evil people can clarify their own minds. You say "evil person", but that person won't do bad things all the time. Whenever he or she stops doing bad things and tries to clear up the mind, he can reach that *jhāna*. Later, when he has bad mind again, he will lose it. Between times, some powers still exist. They are not entirely wiped out.

Q24. Is that statement I quoted logical and reasonable?

A24. While practicing the person is no longer evil, because the mind becomes purer and purer. But, the purpose of this concentration or meditation is for something else, not for *Right Wisdom*. During the time the mind is pure, the *rūpa* and *arūpa* forms are like those of a yogī. But, some yogī with even high-level concentration of mind still get angry sometimes and condemn one another. They can still go back to meditating.

Q25. That means that it is still possible?

A25. Yes, that is possible, but not the right way. Not the right way to develop *Right Understanding*. Not the right way to develop *Right Wisdom*. Therefore, he will destroy himself later.

Questions Posed by a Foreign Monk

Q1. Is Gruat Nam (pouring water) a 100% Buddhist ritual?

A1. No, it was originally Brāhmana. Whenever they offer something to another person they poured water as a symbol of separating from the thing given. This meant they gave without conditions. When the ritual was adopted by Buddhism, the meaning changed. Here it is used to transfer merit collected from the past up to the present to other people, especially to the deceased.

We recite Pali words, but you are welcome to wish whatever you want. I would like to add that we should not only transfer our merits to our deceased relatives but also to everyone else, because, don't forget that we have been born countless times already, so nearly all world beings are our relatives. I am sure you came to this temple because once you were either my relative or my close student. So, when transferring merit, do it to close relatives first, then to all world beings.

Q2. But, if we go on giving merit away each time we gain some, would it not mean that we would end up having none left for our own use?

A2. Oh no, you see merit is like a light or a candle. Imagine yourself with a candle in your hand and see the light shining all around you. Transferring

merit means that you invite everyone to come and appreciate your light and to receive it from you. In other words, they will come with their candles to light from yours. Like that, you can see, your candle never gets weaker, but in fact brighter. Why? Because the light from the candles of all the people you have invited will reflect back on you.

Q3. *When I am meditating, my attention seems to be concentrated mostly on all the arising spheres and bodies. When will I have the possibility to contemplate and when can I develop that all important wisdom?*

A3. Any time the mind is free from hindrances, you can go on contemplating. For example, when you see the sphere clearly, you can enlarge it at will, which would then mean that your Sphere of Vision, Sphere of Memory, Sphere of Thoughts, and Sphere of Awareness would be larger too. Just go on until it is about the size of your whole body.

In that state, supernatural vision will be developed, enabling you to observe all angles of your body simultaneously. In other words, you do not have to move your vision from place to place to see at all.

You can now contemplate on every organ of your body until you fully realize that not one single part is attractive, but all organs are in fact impure.

This is also a very effective way to calm down your mind from sexual desire. I will give you an example.

When I was still a layman I took a commuter pickup bus *(song taew)* home. I was lucky to get a seat, but as the bus filled there was standing room only and people stood very close. A young lady stood right in front of me, facing me, and her bosom was at times touching my face as the bus swayed. I was concentrated all the time, and in my mind I intended to see what she looked like. During the ride I saw every part of her body that I wished to see, and I then realized that it was in fact very dirty. She had her period and a rather unpleasant odor hit my mind at that point.

So, that was contemplation of the human body *(kāyagatā sati)*, and I have used that technique ever since, both on my own body and those of others. It also helped me in staying away from my spouse for ten years prior to my ordination as a monk.

When you get a sexual feeling, be mindful right away. Use your wisdom and start contemplating as soon as you get rid of the hindrances. Purify yourself from the crude mind up to more and more refined minds. When you reach the purest, the most calm, contemplate! You will calm down any sexual desire by seeing the reality of all organs. Be mindful all the time!

Q4. Would I ever be able to look into the future during meditation?

A4. Whenever you see the sphere and concentrate at the center of the center, you will see a small space, about the size of the hole of a needle or even smaller, depending on your level of concentration. The higher the level, the smaller the space. At the center of that space there exists an extremely thin thread or string—very thin indeed and transparent. It leads from your birth into the future. Stop still at the center so that your mind becomes neutral. Don't create any pictures, be neutral and make it your intention to follow the course of the string. When the center expands itself you will see your own life during the coming five to ten years. Become that older body and go to the center of the center and you can go on advancing your age until you see your own dead body.

I am sure that anyone who has a pure and neutral mind or *Dhammakāya* will know when they are going to die and how. When seeing the dead body of themselves, they can use the experience for recollection of death (*maraṇānusati*).

Even though we know the exact day we are going to die and in which position, we still do not get attached to it. In our wisdom we see our body and mind (five aggregates) as impermanent, suffering, and non-self.

As long as you have cravings you will have that string. In other words, strings exist within the four world bodies (Human, Celestial, Brahman and Formless Brahman). But, the *Dhammakāya* doesn't have any string.

I will, however, advise you that when you reach this level you should not talk to anyone about it. That would be violating Lord Buddha's disciplinaries. A monk only does it for the wisdom involved. I would also like to emphasize that as long as we are not saints or *arahantas* these things we are seeing are, of course, impermanent. So, doing this kind of contemplation requires mindfulness at all times.

Q5. What about looking back into previous lives?

A5. Focus your attention at the center of the crude human body's sphere. Make your mind neutral and observe again that very small space where the thin transparent sting will appear. You then make it your intention to see your own life in the past, let us say ten years back in time. Stop still at the center of the center until your mind is perfectly concentrated. Then the center will expand itself and you will see yourself when you were ten years younger. Then concentrate your mind and let it stand still at the center of that body and keep on going further and further back in time until you see yourself at birth. You can then go even further back to when you were in your mother's womb.

Now go to the center of the baby and aim to see your life previous to this one. When you see it, observe where you are and who you are, generation after generation, further and further back in time.

Whenever you see these past lives you may contemplate on all the five aggregates of compound matter. Living compound things are subject to change according to the factors of good deeds (caused by merit) or bad deeds (caused by passion or craving). This will cause a person to be reborn in either a happy or a suffering world. Anyone who is attached to these compound things with craving and illusion, bad speech, bad action, and bad thoughts, will be reborn in a suffering world. Living a meritorious life of good deeds will lead to bliss and happiness in the next existence. The effect of suffering and happiness might even be experienced in the present lifetime. You will finally realize that each life you observe is in fact non-self and no permanent refuge to anyone.

Then, contemplate the three characteristics of all compound things, before making it your intention to return to the present. Purify yourself by standing still at the center of the more and more refined bodies, by now probably even brighter and purer than before, until you reach the purest *Dhammakāya*. This will result in detachment from all aggregates. You should have a neutral mind free from any feelings, happy or unhappy, to obtain a peaceful

mind of high absorption.

The purest *Dhammakāya* will then appear in *Nibbāna* (the Supra-mundane plane) where Enlightened *Dhammakāyas* of Lord Buddha and Saints whose five aggregates have passed away will exist. You will see Lord Buddha (the enlightened *Dhammakāya*) sitting on his throne with his enlightened disciples gathered around him in a half circle. But not only that, you will also see the countless Buddhas of the past, both the Subbaññu Buddhas (surrounded by disciples) and the Pacceka Buddhas (sitting alone).

A Foreign Monk's Experience

I became a novice by full-moon and ordained as a monk by new moon, both days being Buddhist holidays (*wan phra*). The day before the full moon is "head-shaving day" and on the days of both full and new moon (*Uposatha day*) the community of monks will assemble in the consecrated hall and listen to a pali recital of the Disciplinary Code, a monk's 227 fundamental rules.

The Disciplinary Code

The disciplinary code is basically a lesson in development of mindfulness. That is its main purpose. Some people might be astounded by so many precepts, but these are only the main ones. On top of that there are over a hundred additional rules. As a foreigner I had to learn an additional couple of hundred unwritten rules which are natural to a Thai but new and strange to a

foreigner. For instance the various levels of the *wai* and when to use it, the difference in language spoken to monks and lay people, the rule of sitting while drinking, and never sniffing a flower to mention just a few.

The first four rules are the most important, since transgression would mean a permanent loss of one's status as a *bhikkhu* (monk). The four things to abstain from are:

- Indulgence in sexual intercourse.
- Taking something which the owner hasn't yet given as a present.
- Deliberately killing a human being or causing him or her to die.
- Untruthfully boasting of having attained Superior Insight or possessing supernatural powers.

What is Buddhism

The ultimate goal of a Buddhist is to reach *Nibbāna* (literally "extinction" or freedom from desire and thus from suffering). Effectively it is an end not only to *dukkha* (suffering) and *kamma* (action) but also to the cycle of rebirths. This permanent, causeless, effectless and non-compound state can be reached through mental and moral self-purification while a person is still alive, thus making his physical death the last one *(parinibbāna)*.

However, most Thais seem to aim for rebirth in a " better" existence rather than intending to reach *Nibbāna*, feeling they are somehow not yet worthy of it. By making merit feeding monks, giving donations, taking

part in ceremonies and by meditating they move towards fulfillment of the factors of perfection.

To reach *Nibbāna* one has to fully comprehend and absorb the *Four Noble Truths (Cattāri Ariya-Saccāni).*

- There is unsatisfactoriness (or suffering)
- The arising of suffering
- The cessation of suffering
- The way leading to the cessation of suffering.

For better understanding they can also be viewed as:

- Diagnosis of an illness
- Prognosis
- Recovery
- The medicine to cure the illness.

Lord Buddha realized that all forms of existence are subject to suffering. Maybe a better word would be unsatisfactoriness or disease or imperfection or even conflict (the conflict between our desires and the facts of life). These are things like sickness, old age, death, fear, tiredness, irritation, frustration, association with unpleasant people and conditions, separation from pleasant people and conditions, not having one's desires fulfilled, and losing people and things near and dear to one.

At first glance, it might seem a rather pessimistic outlook, but in fact it is just being realistic. Something is always bound to happen at some point, changing happiness to sorrow and satisfaction to disappointment. If we desire something and can't get it, we suffer. If on the other hand we manage to get it, it won't mean eternal bliss, because

after some time we may get bored and desire something else, hoping it might be better.

So, the arising of unsatisfactoriness is due to man's constant craving or desire for sensual pleasure and existence. We tend to forget that we received our senses in order to protect our lives and avoid certain dangers. We use them instead to merely fulfill our desires.

But, don't despair. The Buddha assures us that there is a way out. A way to eliminate the cause of suffering. Namely, by following the *Noble Eightfold Path (Ariya- aṭṭhaṅgika-magga).*

In some ways it is misleading to call it a path. Because there is no "I" or "Self" found in Buddhism, there is no "walker" for the path. For that reason, Zen Buddhism sometimes refers to it as the "Gateless Gate".

The Forest Tradition

In June I went on an interesting trip to the Northeastern part of Thailand *(Isaan)*. *Isaan* is the place where one can still experience traditional monastic life of the " forest" tradition with monks adhering strictly to the *Vinaya* training rules like never touching money, sewing their own robes and dying them with a dye from the wood of the jack fruit tree.

I visited a rather famous monastery near Ubon Ratchatani called the "International Forest Monastery" *(Wat Pa Nanachat)*. It is indeed very international. The abbot is Canadian, the Vice-Abbot British and the monks

come from all over the world including Sweden and Denmark.

The main purpose of my visit was to experience the very modest living style of a forest monk, so I tried to adhere strictly to their rules. The temple bell sounded at 3 am and at 3:30 we would all gather in the open air sala, chanting in both English and Pali, and then meditating in total darkness.

The alms round was long, about seven kilometers, taking us through rice paddies and poor villages, covering at least 100 house calls. When our long line of monks would reach a village, it was often a moving sight to see most of the population kneeling in long rows along the main street, each holding the typical basket of sticky rice over the head.

The *kutis* (monk's dwellings) have neither electricity nor running water, so one of the many daily duties was hauling water from the wells. The absence of light motivates monks to spend the evening meditating rather than reading books. That is the way the founder, the late Ajahn Chah wanted it.

On holy days *(wan phra)* the monks and the rest of the community made the effort to stay up all night without lying down, practicing non-stop sitting and walking meditation until 5:00 am. I was impressed to see about thirty lay people from the village joining us throughout the night. Many of them had come every week for a night's meditation ever since the temple opened eighteen years ago.

Why do We Meditate

Meditation is not reserved for Buddhists only. It will also help people from other religions to fully comprehend the depths of their religion. It has countless benefits for people in all walks of life.

First let us have a look at the mere physical benefits. Pulse and breathing slow down considerably, giving the body deep rest, beneficial for cell regeneration. The rate of metabolism decreases by 20%, blood pressure becomes lower, causing less strain on the heart and the lactate ion concentrate in the blood (high during stress) will decrease by approximately 33%. Meditation will cure migraines, some forms of paralysis, and high blood pressure. People are also known to age less quickly and even the skin texture will change. The psychological effect will furthermore help in weight reduction.

The mental benefits are numerous too. A busy person gets rid of tension and a worried person will become calm and find peace. It helps in overcoming fear in the heart and increases an elderly person's joy of living. There is even strong evidence that it can help alcoholics and drug addicts in overcoming their dangerous habits. It will increase one's ability to learn and memorize and, moreover, make one a happy person both awake and asleep, not frightened of danger or even of death.

On a higher level, meditation can be used to purify the mind to the level where one will reach *Nibbāna*

temporarily. The deeper stages of concentration may also be used to contemplate physical and mental objects and thereby fully absorb the real nature of all compound things (that they are subject to unsatisfactoriness, impermanent and non-self). The great masters will even develop supernatural faculties enabling them to see into both the past and future, read minds and heal illnesses.

My monastery specializes in a particularly deep meditation technique called the *Vijjā Dhammakāya Approach*. This method was forgotten for over 2,000 years until Luang Phor Sodh, the late Abbot of Wat Paknam, near Bangkok, rediscovered it under deep meditation in 1917. The current Vice-Abbot, Venerable Chao Khun Bhawana-Kosolthera, is now the only surviving disciple of Luang Phor Sodh. At the age of 74 he is rather feeble, but has assured that the technique will live on by tutoring our own Abbot, Luang Pa, Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo.

Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo and Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram

I am going to tell you the history of this temple, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, and also the reason why I established the temple and quit my job to become a monk.

When I was still a layman, about 12 years before resigning from the U.S. Information Service in Bangkok, I brought my two daughters to Wat Paknam to study meditation. I realized already then that the *Vijjā Dhammakāya Approach* which was taught there is very helpful

in giving the practitioner the right wisdom to see and understand how things really are, rather than just reading the scriptures and listening to the teachers. My daughters started practicing and they were both soon capable of seeing both Heaven and Hell and also *Nibbāna*.

I was already interested in *Dhamma* at that time and had read many books by Luang Phor Bhuddadāsa and other meditation masters. So, I understood the basic structure of Buddhist practice: the disciplinaries, concentration of mind, development of *Right Wisdom*, and *samatha-vipassanā* meditation which enables us to see the right concept of *The Four Noble Truths*.

I knew the theory, but when reading the many textbooks. I never came across a meditation technique which would go as deep as the technique taught by Luang Phor Wat Paknam. In terms of concentration of mind *(samatha)* and *Right Wisdom* development *(vipassanā)* his method leads the practitioner to better and purer supernatural vision.

My daughters were then 12 and 14 years old and both of them reached a rather high level of meditation, right up to *Dhammakāya*.

At that time I was interested in knowing where my late father was reborn. Knowing how good my daughters' meditation was, their meditation master advised them to inspect and find out where my father was. I was only 20 years old when he passed away. That was one year before I became married, so my daughters never knew

their grandfather. In fact, they had never seen a picture of him.

After some time, both girls saw that my father had been reborn in Hell. This was because of his drinking. My father didn't really drink a lot, just a small glass in the morning to enable him to eat more and then a glass in the evening so he could enjoy dinner. Occasionally he would invite some friends for a drink, but not to get drunk, just for good digestion. But, that happened regularly and it became a habit. According to Lord Buddha's teachings, anyone who violates the precepts of morality, in this case the 5th, will be reborn in suffering worlds, namely the worlds of Hell, the world of animals, the world of ghosts, or the world of demons. Even though my father was not a heavy drinker it still became a habit and he was attached to it.

So, you see, this meditation method gives you the right information or *Right Wisdom* by seeing through this right and effective method of *Right Concentration* as taught by Luang Phor Wat Paknam.

Here is another example of how a meditator can see the natural reality that a lay person cannot experience. One day two dogs, a male and a female, were having let us say "a close relationship" and the meditation master asked my daughters to check where the dogs came from, by bringing in the center of the male dog for inspection at the center of the center and thereby recalling the previous generations and past lives. When they came to the fourth generation, they saw that he had been a man,

but because of bad conduct in the form of adultery he was reborn as a dog.

I worked at the USIS as a research specialist at that time, so I already knew that if you get the right information by the right method you will be able to see reality. Also, the more perfect information or reliable data you get, the better the conclusion of the analysis will be.

My daughters were very innocent, for they were still young. They did not study any text books, but they could meditate at a very high level. This was because their minds were still pure and unattached to external objects. With them as a reliable source of data, I now had perfect information, proving that craving leads to bad speech, bad ideas, and bad conduct such as adultery and drinking liquor. The effect of committing these sins and practicing them regularly until they become a habit, an attachment, would lead to rebirth in a suffering world.

I realized then that the *Vijjā Dhammakāya Meditation Approach* taught by Luang Phor Wat Paknam is indeed very effective. It uses the best of the 40 methods taught by Lord Buddha, in this case the crystal ball *(āloka-kasiṇa)*. It is one of the most effective ways to bring in the mind's components (the *Sphere of Vision*, the *Sphere of Memory*, the *Sphere of Thought*, and the *Sphere of Awareness*) to stop still at the right point. These four natural spheres of each individual person always tend to wander outside the body, getting attached to many objects. Therefore, it çan be difficult to bring them in to stop still at the proper place, which is at the

center of the body where the internal body, mind and *Dhamma* exist.

We don't just have the crude body and mind, we also have several refined bodies, minds and *Dhamma* at the center of the center of each other, right up to the purest mind and body which is *Dhammakāya*. Lord Buddha told us that he is, or is called, *Dhammakāya*, the purest element beyond the five aggregates of the worldly beings.

In the *samatha-vipassanā* meditation method taught by Luang Phor Wat Paknam, the students are told to imagine a sphere of which the center is located at the center of the body. The center of the body is where our breathing in and out begins and ends, about an inch above the navel. Luang Phor Wat Paknam advised us to concentrate our mind's components at that point, where the internal body, mind and *Dhamma* exist at the center of each other. Imagineing the sphere means that your mind components are all in the sphere. This enables you to develop a high level of concentration up to the first *jhāna* or absorption, removing all hindrances to *Right Wisdom* automatically. This is the first method according to the *Vijjā Dhammakāya Approach.*

Secondly, while imagining the center of the sphere at the center of the body, Luang Phor also advised students to recite the words *Sammā Arahaṃ* at the very center. *Sammā* comes from *Sammāsambuddho* meaning *Right Enlightenment*, Lord Buddha's *Right Wisdom. Arahaṃ* means Lord Buddha's purity, being far removed from passion and bad conduct. By reciting *Sammā*

Araham we are recalling Lord Buddha's virtues in terms of *Right Wisdom* and *Purity*. This is a *samatha* approach which will help us to calm down our mind to become purer and purer at the center of the body.

Imagine the sphere. If it is difficult for you, you may observe that your breathing in and out will pass through the center of the sphere. This will help you to see it more clearly. Do not move your mind up and down with your breath. The mind should stop still at the center of the sphere all the time.

These three methods combination are very effective:

- Imagining the sphere and concentrating your mind at its center;
- Recollecting the virtues of Lord Buddha in terms of reciting the words *Sammā Arahaṃ* and bringing these virtues into your mind;
- Observing your breath passing through the sphere.

This will cover all aspects of *Right Concentration* of mind and can solve problems of any kind for the meditator. There is really no need to use other methods. The three methods previously mentioned are perfect.

When the practitioner's mind components are calmed down and perfectly concentrated at the center of the body, all elements of the six sense organs will automatically be there. Because of this, supernatural vision will be developed effectively, enabling the meditator to see more and more refined things and thereby obtain better *Right Wisdom*.

With your physical eyesight you can only see crude objects. With your supernatural vision you can see celestial bodies in Heaven and ghosts in Hell. This is what happened for my daughters in the aforementioned example.

You can go further, seeing the *Brahman Body* and mind, the *Formless Brahman Body* and mind, and beyond that the *Dhammakāya*, which is the purest state of mind. You can then carry on developing purer and purer *Dhamakāyas* until you reach the most refined which will appear in *Nibbāna*. It is completely detached from the five worldly aggregates, crude or refined, detached from the whole world. In that state of mind you will have the purest and most reliable supernatural vision, namely, *Buddha-Cakkhu*.

Buddha-Cakku will enable you to see two kinds of nature: First, compound things like the crude body and mind, celestial body and mind, the aggregates and elements and *dhamma*. Second, you will see the non-compound which is *Nibbāna*. Yes, you can actually see what is going on in *Nibbāna*. This is very important because any meditation practitioner or any Buddhist would, of course, like to reach *Nibbāna*. Most meditation masters are only able to explain the conditions of *Nibbāna* (that it is void of self and free of passions and cravings). That is all they can explain. I have never heard of any other method in this country or even in the world that enables you to see *Nibbāna*. Only the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach as taught by Luang Phor Wat Paknam can lead you to it.

Those who can see *Nibbāna* will clearly understand Lord Buddha's teachings on the three aspects of the non-compound in the *Nibbāna-Sutta I, II and III*, which state that these non-compound elements exist. You will understand perfectly that, first, *Nibbāna* is a condition void of self and free of passion or craving.

Second, *Nibbāna* is the possessor of those conditions, the enlightened *Dhammakāya*. (Lord Buddha and the saints are the enlightened *Dhammakāya*, not the five aggregates of human beings or Celestial, Brahman or Formless Brahman beings.)

Third, *Nibbāna* is also the place where the enlightened *Dhammakāya* exists.

These three aspects of *Nibbāna* can be understood through the method of meditation taught by Luang Phor Wat Paknam. It made me understand clearly the third *Noble Truth* (extinction of suffering) and the effective method of extinction of suffering, much clearer than through any other meditation method.

Lord Buddha taught about three characteristics of *Nibbāna: Nibbāna* is supreme happiness, permanent and immortal (everlasting). This is the exact opposite of compound things. He said "Bhikkus, you should find a refuge or self." Let me try to explain the meaning of the words "refuge or self". Even though the human being or the aggregates are impermanent, we can still use them as a refuge to develop virtues up to the non-compound refuge which then becomes the real self. Lord Buddha only talked about the "self" twice in the scriptures. Maybe he did not want to confuse people. The word

"non-self" is difficult enough to comprehend. But when one fully absorbs the meaning of that word, the understanding of "self" will appear automatically.

Let me explain it like this. Everything permanent is happy. Everything never-changing exists forever. The non-compound is in command, so to speak. It controls itself to exist forever, to be happy permanently, not to be sick, not to die, and then not to be reborn. We are then in control or command. We are "self" or our refuge. But if the compound says "I do not want to die...", it will die anyway. It is impermanent, not in control. It is "non-self". But we can still use it as a sort of "temporary self" which then later will be emancipated *(vimutti)* from defilements (crude and subtle) and become the "real self". For anyone who becomes enlightened, that is *Dhammakāya* or Lord Buddha or a saint, when they die, only the five aggregates will die. The non-compound element, the enlightened *Dhammakāya* will exist forever in *Nibbāna*.

Knowing the cause of suffering is not the end. One must also know the cause of the cause. The utmost original cause of suffering and the original factor of happiness. All this can be developed through *Vijjā Dhammakāya* meditation.

At Wat Paknam, for example, they still help to cure sickness through meditation. Because of that, many people come to support Wat Paknam. Even though Luang Phor Wat Paknam passed away many years ago, it is still one of the best temples in Thailand. Why? Because the meditation there helps people to be happy

and to live good lives. Not only that, it will also help towards elimination of what I call the "un-peace" in individuals, the community, the nation, and the world. By the word "un-peace" I mean the disharmony, agitation, unrest, turmoil, conflict and commotion, etc.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam always said that Thailand can withstand external enemies and serious problems because of the Buddhist religion and the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* Meditation method. Other methods can also help, but not so effectively. So, you see, this unique method can help world peace. This, together with the other benefits mentioned earlier was why I selected Luang Phor Wat Paknam's meditation approach.

In 1975 I organized the *Dhammakāya* Meditation for People Project at Wat Paknam. The Abbot of Wat Paknam is the president of the project. The Vice-presidents are the Vice-Abbot for Educational Affairs, Phra Thep-Suthee and the Vice Abbot for Meditation Affairs, Luang Phor Bhavana Kosol-Thera. The committee members are monks and lay people. The people active in this project have, in fact, been Luang Phor Bhavana-Kosol-Thera and myself.

By broadcasting radio programs with the theory and practice over about thirty nationwide stations since 1975, I have experienced an increased interest in this meditation method throughout the country. People started to ask for meditation masters to help teaching at their temples and organizations, but we did not then have enough qualified masters at Wat Paknam. I then proposed a plan to recruit monks from all over the country to come

and be trained at the temple, but found that the place was not peaceful enough for that purpose. Therefore, in 1981 I organized another project, the *Buddha Bhavana Vijja Dhammakaya* Project, this time at Wat Saket. In this way I could teach more people in the center of Bangkok and also have more manpower and response for establishing a future institute.

During that year, I obtained some land in Rajburi Province for establishing the proposed institute. An area of about 30 rai (13.5 acres) was donated by a well-to-do family and I then bought an additional 42 rai (19 acres) from the donor. In order to make it all more effective, we then organized a registered foundation. Professor Bunyut Suchiva, a former President of the Supreme Court, has been President of this foundation from its very beginning. This was because we needed proper legal, financial and property management as well as fund raising.

The area here was at that time a rice field, but because of its dryness and salty soil, it was not good for anything. During the day it was very hot because there were only a few trees in the area. Also, being so close to the sea and rather windy, it was very cold in the cold season.

We began organizing meditation sessions in 1982 and I spread the news about this among monks throughout the country. We needed to help monks to become better qualified in the theory and practice of our meditation method and to eventually become meditation masters. Also, I was concerned that this religion would not uphold

its standards in terms of the behavior and practice of its monks and novices. Twice a year since then we have organized retreats from May 1-15 and December 1-15. During the May retreat, 300-400 monks and novices and approximately the same number of lay people and nuns attend the course. During the December retreat there are usually 400-600 monks and novices and a similar number of laity and nuns present.

I, alone, could not do much to change the structure of the Buddhist organization and practice in this country, as I am by no means powerful, but only a small person. What I could do, however, was to establish this institute to organize meditation sessions and teach both theory and practice to the monks. Both monks and novices are trained here so they can prepare themselves in becoming future teachers and meditation masters. We do our very best as far as manpower, property and capability will allow us.

Through our meditation sessions, we give monks, novices and lay people the knowledge of effective theory and practice. Through concentration of mind they will be able to develop pure supernatural vision which, in turn, will bring them right and reliable data, enabling them to develop *Right Wisdom* and become enlightened.

My intention is to help restore Buddhist practice in our country and also abroad. Apart from training people here at the temple, we still broadcast meditation programs over about thirty radio stations and we also telecast through Channel 9 and regional channels. We recently made a program for Her Majesty the Queen's birthday on August 12, meditating along with the Abbot of Wat Paknam.

This is just one example of mediation for the public. Whenever our nation has serious problems such as a serious demonstration, we will help with meditation for the nation.

Here at the temple we have daily regular practice at 5:30 am. and 6:30 pm. Every first Saturday of the month, lay people from Bangkok and other provinces come here to perform merit and meditate. Every Sunday at 9:30 am. and 1:00 pm. and Mondays and Thursdays at 6:30 pm. I also teach meditation at Wat Srakesa in Bangkok.

We support any temple or organization that would like to train their own people by supplying qualified meditation masters from here and by giving advice throughout the nation and abroad. I have been invited to give lectures and teach in Malaysia 2-3 times a year over the past six years and I have been lecturing in the United States for four years now. The Somdej Phra Buddhacarn of Wat Saket has, however, advised me to encourage foreigners to come here for training rather than me going abroad to teach, because, after all, I am starting to get old.

These are our current activities. As for the future, my plans are to establish mobile meditation teams. After the two main meditation retreats of the year in May and December, I will organize it so that the visiting monks can make two or three stops on their way back to their own temples to teach meditation at other selected temples. Next year, in May, I plan to have a team covering the South, and next December the Mobile Meditation Team

will teach in the North and Southern part of the Northeast. We will also try to get to the Northern part of the Northeast for a couple of weeks before the coming May retreat. Hopefully, within the next five years I will have enough teams to cover the whole country regularly. I am hoping that this meditation method will enable people to become more peaceful and have more prosperity. Furthermore, I hope this meditation method will be able to help remove the suffering and "un-peace" in this country and in the world.

In 1991 this area was registered as a legitimate organization or temple, and on July 9th of the same year I was unanimously voted for and then appointed as the Abbot. So, that is the history of this temple and why I selected the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach as our meditation method and why I quit my job at age 57, three years before my retirement age, to become a monk for life.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have deliberated on the principles and practice of *Dhammakāya* meditation in considerable detail. We noted that *Vijjā Dhammakāya* combines aspects of concentration *(samatha)* and wisdom *(vipassanā)* meditation. These, together with morality *(sīla)* make up the *Noble Eightfold Path*.

Vijjā Dhammakāya samatha meditation utilizes three of Lord Buddha's forty concentration devices: visualization of the light sphere *(āloka kasiṇa)*, repetition of a mantra *sammā arahaṃ* to call Lord Buddha's wisdom and purity into the mind *(Buddhānussati)*, and mindfulness of breathing *(ānāpānasati)*.

The fourth principle at the heart of *Vijjā Dhammakāya* is concentration at the center of the center. By bringing the mind to rest at the center of the body, the meditator can see his or her own *Dhamma* sphere which reveals the consequences of moral behavior. Continually focusing at the center of the center, the practitioner can proceed through ever purer body-minds all the way to *nibbāna*.

Vijjā Dhammakāya vipassanā practice aims at *Right Wisdom* through contemplation of the body, feelings, mental functions and phenomena *(dhamma)*. There are two levels, mundane *Right Understanding* of compound phenomena *(saṅkhāra)* and supra-mundane *Right Understanding* of non-compound nature *(visaṅkhāra)* which is *nibbāna* and *Dhammakāya*. *Vijjā Dhammakāya* is especially effective in helping meditators to experience non-compound nature directly.

The real heart of *Vijjā Dhammakāya* meditation is practice. Now that you have read about the principles and techniques, I strongly urge you to put them to use. Academic learning can indicate the way, but direct experience through meditation is the path to purification and wisdom.

Appendix A

PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR

Phra Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo

Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyaram and
Director, Dhammakāya Buddhist Meditation Institute

Date of Birth	March 6, 1929
Entered Monkhood	March 6, 1986
Address	Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyaram Bangpae-Damnoen Saduak Road (Kilometer 14) Damnoen Saduak District Rajburi Province, Thailand
Buddhist Dhamma	Completed Grade Three of Buddhist Theory *(Nak Dham Ek)* and Grade Six of Pali Studies
Meditation Master	Venerable Phra Bhavana Kosol Thera Deputy Abbot, Meditation Master, and Director of Meditation Affairs, Wat Paknam
Meditation Experience	Practiced Buddhist Meditation since 1970.
Preceptorship	Appointed since January 31, 1996

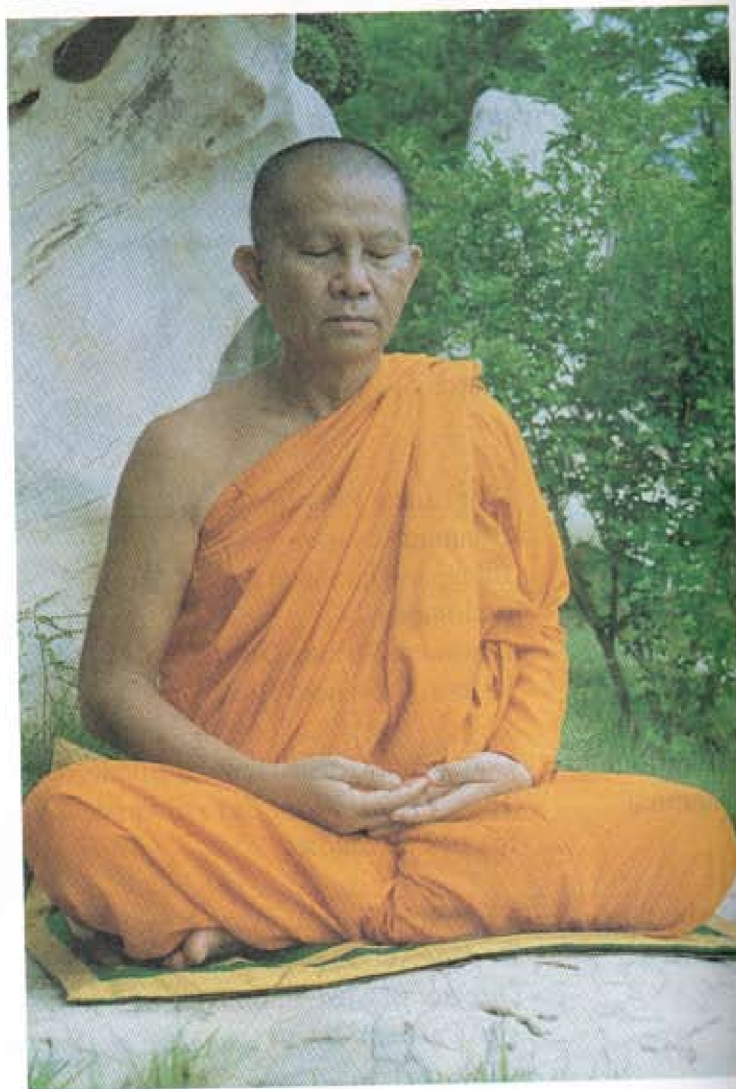


Figure 10
Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo

Profile Before Monkhood of Mr. Sermchai Polpathanaridhi

Work	Research Specialist, United States Information Services (USIS) 125 Sathorn South Road Bangkok Thailand 10120
	Visiting Lecturer in Research Methodology, Research and Evaluation, and Public Opinion Surveys to various academic institutions (Thammasart University, Bangkok University, etc.)
Academic Qualifications	Certificate in Accountancy, Bachelors of Commerce, and Masters of Arts in Public Administration (Honors), Thammasart University
	Certificate in Social Science Research, Institute of Social Research, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.
	Certificate in Wang OIS Management Courses organized by USIS, Washington DC, USA.

Appendix B

BIOGRAPHY OF THE VENERABLE CHAO KHUN PHRA MONGKOL-THEPMUNI (Sodh Candasaro)

The Late Abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen

The Master of the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach, the late Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, is fondly known and revered throughout the land as Luang Phor Wat Paknam, or simply as Luang Phor.

Luang Phor was born October 10, 1884 (B.E. 2427) to a humble rice-merchant family of Supanburi Province, as Sodh, the second child of Nai Ngern and Nang Sudjai Meekaewnoi. As was typical in those days, young Sodh received his education from the temples. At fourteen, when his father died, he became the chief bread winner for the family. Successful as he was in rice trading, at age nineteen the compassionate young man resolved to become a monk *(bhikkhu)* for life.

Having made arrangements to ensure his mother's welfare, the young man entered monkhood three years later in July 1906 (B.E. 2449). At the age of twenty-two, he was ordained as Candasaro Bhikkhu at Wat Songpeenong, near his home. Phra Ajahn Dee of Wat Pratusarn, Supanburi, was his main Preceptor.

The day after his ordination, Candasaro Bhikkhu began meditation practice and study of Pali scriptures.

In search of deeper and wider knowledge, he moved from Wat Songpeenong to Wat Bodhi (Wat Phra Chetupon Vimonmangkalaram) in Bangkok. There, he frequented the centers of meditation practice and Pali study.

Soon, Luang Phor was recognized by his teachers, Phra Khru Yanavirati (Po) of Wat Bodhi and Phra Ajahn Singha of Wat Lakorn Tham, as an accomplished meditation instructor.

During those early dry seasons, Luang Phor adopted *Dhutaṅga vatra*, the Austere Practices for Purification such as wandering in solitude through the forest wilderness, staying in caves and practicing the *Dhamma* with piety.

After ten years, Luang Phor set aside his informal study of Pali Scriptures, having reached sufficiency to read the *Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. Thereafter, he devoted himself totally to meditation practice.

Luang Phor spent the next Buddhist Lent at Wat Bang Khoo Vieng, on Bangkok Noi Canal, where his benefactor, Phra Ajahn Choom, was the abbot. There, at nightfall on the full-moon day of September, in his twelfth year as a Bhikkhu, Luang Phor prepared himself for meditation in the *uposatha*. He invoked illumination and guidance, and made a vow dedicating his life to Buddhism. Luang Phor vowed not to rise from his seat in front of the Buddha statue until he was permitted to attain some understanding of the *Dhamma* as discerned by the Buddha.

With his mind set and its components of vision, memory, thought and cognition all at rest at the center of his body, two finger-breadths above the navel, Luang Phor was able to penetrate the full depths of the *Dhamma* as it was revealed to and by the Buddha. That revelation of the *Dhamma* and ever more refined *Dhammakāyas* (Dhamma bodies) was so profound that it was only possible when the mind was at rest at the body's center. After Lent, Luang Phor went to teach at Wat Bang Pla, where three monks and four laymen who followed his meditation procedure were also able to attain various degrees of insight. Thereafter, Luang Phor gradually became renowned throughout the land.

Somdej Phra Vanarat, Head of Bhasicharoen Sangha District, spotted Luang Phor's potential and requested him to assume the Abbotship of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen. This was a neglected and deteriorating monastery erected five centuries earlier. Luang Phor wanted to decline this request, but he could not. With utmost patience and remarkable leadership, Luang Phor gradually rebuilt the monastery until it is today one of the largest and most important monasteries in the land. In 1949 (BE 2492), Luang Phor received the ecclesiastical rank of Phra Bhavana-Kosolthera. This was followed by the title of Phra Mongkol-Rajmuni, and in 1957 (BE 2500) by the title Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni.

Vijjā Dhammakāya, the revelation of the *Dhamma* as attained by Luang Phor, was the heart of his teaching. His service to Buddhism can be seen from his regular routine:

- Meditating day and night with *bhikkhus* and *upāsikās* in different sessions
- Leading *bhikkhus* and *sāmaṇeras* in the *uposatha* every morning and evening, paying homage to the *Triple Gems* and ending with a sermon
- Teaching public meditation practice every Thursday at 2:00 pm
- Delivering public sermons on holy days *(Uposatha or Wan Phra)* and Sundays
- Supervising the Pali Institute

Thus, Luang Phor devoted his time and effort almost exclusively to teaching meditation. His disciples multiplied into the thousands. It was not uncommon for revered *bhikkhus* in far corners of the country, who apparently never met Luang Phor, to know him well and to respect him as their mentor.

His decease at the age of seventy-five, on February 3, 1959 (BE 2502) was just a pause for the immortal master. His life should serve to remind other mortals to pursue their own obligations to the *Noble Path* carefully. Luang Phor's teachings live on, manifesting the *Ultimate Righteous Truth.*

Phra Bhavana-Kosolthera
(Veera Ganuttamo)

Appendix C

THE DHAMMAKAYA BUDDHIST MEDITATION INSTITUTE

Location

The Institute is located at Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, at kilometer 14 of the Damnoen Saduak Bangpae Road in Damnoen Saduak District of Rajburi Province, about 93.5 kilometers from Bangkok. It encompasses an area of 227 rais. Part of the area, 74 rais, where the main monastery has been constructed, was registered in the year 1991 as Wat Luang Phor Sodh in memory of Luang Phor Wat Paknam, Phra Mongkol Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro).

Objectives

- To teach *Dhammakāya* Buddhist Meditation to the general public who are interested in *Dhamma* practice for purifying the mind and keeping the mind peaceful from passions that cause suffering.
- To train Buddhist monks who are interested in *Dhammakāya* Buddhist Meditation in order to become qualified Meditation Masters and Instructors.
- To maintain *Right Dhammakāya* Buddhist Meditation Practices, according to the teachings of Luang Phor Wat Paknam, His Most Venerable Phra Mongkol Thepmuni, the late Abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen.

Administrative Body

President	The Most Venerable Somdej Phra Buddhajahn, Abbot of Wat Srakesa and Member of the Sangha Council
First Vice President	The Most Venerable Somdej Phra MahaRatchamangkalajahn, Abbot of Wat Paknam and Member of the Sangha Council
Second Vice President	The Venerable Phra Bhavana Kosol Thera, Vice Abbot and Meditation Master of Wat Paknam
General Manager	Phra Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo
Director of Meditation	Phra Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo

Activities

- Special meditation training for monks and lay people is held twice a year, May 1-14 and December 1-14.
- Over thirty retreats have been organized between 1982 and 1996 attended by over 24,000 monks, novices, nuns and lay persons from throughout the country and abroad.
- Meditation training for the general public is being held regularly at the following locations:

- At Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, Rajburi. Daily 5:30 am. and 6:30 pm., and the first Saturday of every month.
- At Sala Karnprien, Wat Srakesa (The Golden Mountain Temple), Bangkok. Every Sunday 9:30 am. and 1:00 pm., and every Monday and Thursday at 6:30 pm.

- Dhamma Practice TV Program, Channel 9, once a month on Sunday (unfixed) 6:30 am.
- Dhamma Practice Radio Programs on about thirty radio stations throughout the country.
- Dhamma Practice for Youth Courses held during 1-15 April.
- Dhamma Practice for various groups available upon request, based on availability of manpower.
- Publications, video cassettes, and audio cassettes on Buddhist Meditation Teachings available for interested persons and groups.

NOTE: All meditation training courses organized by the Institute are free of charge. (Charitable donations are welcome.)

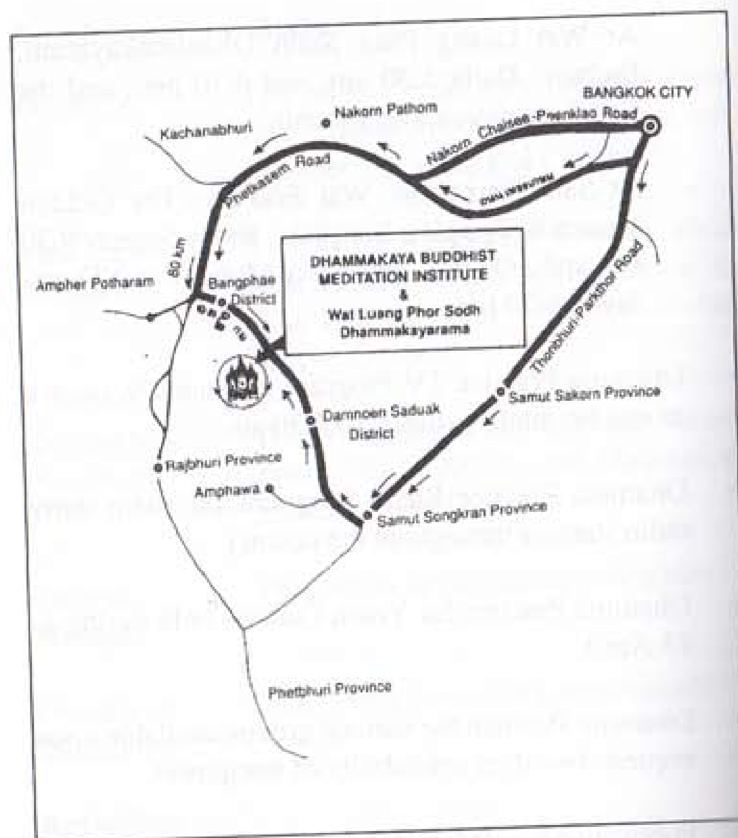


Figure 11
Location of the
Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Institute

Appendix D

WAT LUANG PHOR SODH DHAMMAKAYARAM

Meaning of the Name

Named after the late Abbot of Wat Pak Nam, the Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, affectionately known as Luang Phor Wat Paknam or Luang Phor Sodh. In 1917 he re-discovered the meditation method used to reach *Dhammakāya*. This is the method taught at this temple.

Location

The temple is located within the Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Institute compound. The address is Damnoen Saduak District, Rajburi Province 70130.

Directions

The temple is located along the Damnoen Saduak-Bangpae Road, 94 km southwest of Bangkok. Bus 78 or air conditioned bus 78 (Por Or 2) from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal will drop you off at the temple gate on request. If the air-conditioned bus takes you to the Damnoen Saduak Bus Terminal you can catch a yellow *songthaew* to the temple from there.

Telephone/Fax

Tel. (032) 254650, 253352
Ext. 111 - Abbot
220 - Informations
222 - Fax

Meditation System

The meditation system taught is the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach as initiated by Luang Phor Wat Paknam. This book, *The Heart of Dhammakāya Meditation*, covers the first level of meditation in detail. All three levels–beginner, intermediate and advanced–are taught at the temple.

Teaching Method

The Abbot, Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamanggalo (Thai, age 68), gives instruction in both Thai and English during meditation sessions. Some of the other monks can also give instruction in English. If the Abbot is absent, a tape recording of his teaching will be played.

Description

The temple is located inside the grounds of the Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Institute. The central area, 74 rai (33 acres) has beautifully landscaped park lands with a lake, river, trees and grass. The temple buildings have a distinguished white color.

Size

Resident monks:	50-60 (65-75 during Lent)
Novices:	15-25
Nuns:	1-5
Lay people:	10-15
First Saturday of each month:	500-700
Retreat for Youth April 7-12:	300-500
May Retreat May 1-15	600-800
December Retreat Dec 1-15	1,000-1,500
Major Holidays: [Magha, Visakha, Asalha Puja & King or Queen's birthday]	1,200-2,000

Daily Routine

5:30 am	Morning chanting and meditation
7:00 am	Breakfast
11:00 am	Lunch
6:30 pm	Evening chanting and meditation

Food

Good quality and variety; supplied by contributions from the faithful *pindabat* with additional food prepared by the resident nuns. Monks and novices eat from their

alms bowls. Lay people and nuns eat in the kitchen after the monks and novices. A drink is available during the afternoon and after evening chanting. Monks, novices, nuns and those of the lay people who follow the eight precepts have two meals a day. During the two main retreats monks and novices have one meal a day. However, a cup of soup is available in the morning. Lay people still get two meals a day.

Accommodations

Monks stay in kutis (huts) or in the new block of dwellings. Novices stay in a common dormitory. Individual laymen will stay in a wooden house near the kitchen area, while lay women usually stay in the nun's area. During the May and December retreats, participants will sleep in the open in the *dhutaṅga* tradition with a klod. Men and women live in separate areas.

Write in Advance?

Writing is not necessary, but is recommended so as to make sure that the Abbot is in residence, as he is the main English speaking teacher.

Ordination

Ordination can be requested for novice and monk. 1-2 weeks (Thai) or 3-4 months (foreigner) as a layman (with practising 8 precepts) or as a novice is recommended before ordaining as a monk.

Other Information

Lay people from Bangkok and other provinces come to the temple every first Saturday of the month for making merit and for meditation (9:30 am to 1:00 pm). The Abbot teaches in Sala Karnprien at Wat Srakesa in Bangkok every Sunday at 9:30 am and 1:00 pm as well as on Mondays and Thursdays at 6:30 pm. Dhamma practice programs are broadcast over about thirty radio stations nationwide and telecast over TV channel 9 once a month on Sunday (unfixed) at 6:30 am. Tapes and video cassettes in English as well as copies of the *Heart of Dhammakāyạ Meditation* are on sale at Wat Srakesa and Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram.

Retreats

The two main retreats for monks, novices and lay people are held every year May 1-14 and December 1-14. Dhamma Practice for Youth is held April 1-15. Special retreats for participants in groups requested by government or private organizations, institute or associations are held throughout the year.

Appendix E

THE PRE-MEDITATION SERVICE

Declaration for Adopting the Five Precepts

(Candles and three incense sticks are lit. All bow or prostrate three times in homage to the Buddha, the Dhamma (Buddha's Doctrine), and the Saṅgha (Order of Disciples). Then, all recite with joined palms as follows.)

Homage to Lord Buddha

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa
(Repeat three times)
Homage to the Lord, the Emancipated, the All-Enlightened Buddha

Requesting the Triple Refuge and Five Precepts

Mayaṃ Bhante Tisaraṇena Saha Pañca Sīlāni Yacāma.
May I receive the Triple Refuge together with the Five Precepts.

Dutiyampi Mayaṃ Bhante Tisaraṇena Saha Pañca Sīlāni Yācāma.
For the second time, may I receive the Triple Refuge together with the Five Precepts.

Tatiyampi Mayaṃ Bhante Tisaraṇena Saha Pañca Sīlāni Yācāma.
For the third time, may I receive the Triple Refuge together with the Five Precepts.

(After the monk has recited the following three times, the laity does the same.)

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa
(Repeat three times)
Homage to the Lord, the Emancipated,
the All-Enlightened Buddha

(Repeat after the monk, one verse at a time)

Buddhaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gacchāmi
Dhammaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gacchāmi
Saṅghaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gacchāmi
I accept the Buddha as my refuge
I accept the Dhamma as my refuge
I accept the Sangha as my refuge

Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ Saranaṃ Gacchāmi
Dutiyampi Dhammaṃ Saranaṃ Gacchāmi
Dutiyampi Saṅgham Saranaṃ Gacchāmi
For the second time...
I accept the Buddha as my refuge
I accept the Dhamma as my refuge
I accept the Sangha as my refuge

Tatiyampi Buddhaṃ Saranaṃ Gacchāmi
Tatiyampi Dhammaṃ Saranaṃ Gacchāmi
Tatiyampi Saṅghaṃ Saranaṃ Gacchāmi
For the third time...
I accept the Buddha as my refuge
I accept the Dhamma as my refuge
I accept the Sangha as my refuge

Acceptance of the Five Precepts

Pāṇātipātā Veramaṇī Sikkhāpadaṃ Samādiyāmi
I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from killing.

Adinnādānā Veramaṇī Sikkhāpadaṃ Samādiyāmi
I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from theft.

Kāmesumicchācārā Veramaṇī Sikkhāpadaṃ Samādiyāmi
I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from sexual immorality.

Musāvādā Veramaṇī Sikkhāpadaṃ Samādiyāmi
I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from wrong speech.

Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā Veramaṇī Sikkhāpadaṃ Samādiyāmi
I undertake to observe the precept of refraining from taking intoxicants.

Obeisance to the Triple Gems

(With joined palms, recite the following words of homage and invocation)

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.
(Repeat three times)
Homage to the Lord, the Emancipated,
the All-Enlightened Buddha

*Yamahaṃ Sammāsambuddhaṃ Bhagavantaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gato (Gata–*for ladies*), Iminā Sakkārena Taṃ Bhagavantaṃ Abhipūjayāmi.*
May I now pay homage to the Buddha, All Enlightened by himself, whom I acknowledge as the Refuge whereby all sufferings will be removed.

*Yamahaṃ Svākkhātaṃ Bhagavata Dhammaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gato(Gata–*for ladies*), Iminā Sakkārena Taṃ Dhammaṃ Abhipūjayāmi.* May I now pay homage to the Dhamma, well-preached by the Lord, which I acknowledge as the Refuge whereby all dangers will be removed.

*Yamahaṃ Supaṭipannaṃ Saṅghaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gato (Gata –*for ladies*), Iminā Sakkārena Taṃ Saṅghaṃ Abhipūjayāmi.*
May I now pay homage to the Sangha who practice well, whom I acknowledge as the Refuge whereby all sickness will be removed.

Arahaṃ Sammāsambuddho Bhagavā,
Buddhaṃ Bhagavantaṃ Abhivādemi.
Homage to the All-Enlightened Buddha.
(Prostrate)

Svākkhāto Bhagavatā Dhammo, Dhammaṃ Namassāmi.
Homage to the Dhamma well-preached by the Lord.
(Prostrate)

Supaṭipanno Bhagavato, Sāvakasaṅgho, Saṅghaṃ Namāmi.
Homage to the Sangha who practice well.
(Prostrate)

Resolution (*Adhiṭṭhāna*)

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.
(Repeat three times)
Homage to the Lord, the Emancipated,
the All-Enlightened Buddha

Ukāsa, Accayo No Bhante Accagamā Yathābāle Yathā mulhe Yathāakusale Ye Mayaṃ Karamhā Evaṃ Bhante Mayaṃ Accayo No Paṭiggaṇhatha Āyatiṃ Saṃvareyyāmi.

May I take this opportunity of imploring that for whatever offenses, whether by deed, word or thought, which I may have committed against the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha as I was deluded, heedless and with unwholesomeness entering my mind, may I be pardoned. As from this day I will be cautious and restrained.

May all the great All-Enlightened Buddhas past, present and to come, numberless as the sands in the bowels of the four great oceans, impregnate, illuminate, and irradiate my six senses: the door of vision *(cakkhu-dvāra)*, the door of audition *(sota-dvāra)*, the door of olfaction *(ghāna-dvāra)*, the door of gustation *(jivhā-dvāra)*, the door of form *(kāya-dvāra)*, and the door of the mind *(mano-dvāra)*, so as to apprehend and perceive the *Truth* in its original splendor and pristine purity.

May the Teachings of the Buddhas leading to the attainment of the Supra-mundane *nava-lokuttara*

dhamma, ninefold in scope*, revealed times beyond counting (past, present, and to come), impregnate, illuminate and irradiate my six senses: *cakkhu-dvāra, sota-dvāra, ghāna-dvāra, jivhā-dvāra, kāya-dvāra, and mano-dvāra*, so as to apprehend and perceive the *Truth* in its original splendor and pristine purity.

May all the Emancipated and Noble Disciples of the Buddhas, the Sangha, beyond counting (past, present, and to come), impregnate illuminate, and irradiate, my six senses: *cakkhu-dvāra, sota-dvāra, ghāna-dvāra, jivhā-dvāra, kāya-dvāra, mano-dvāra,* as to apprehend and perceive the truth in its original splendour and pristine purity.

I hereby invoke the aid of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. And also my good preceptor, my good mother, my good father, and all my spiritual resources:

Dāna-pāramī	Merits of Charity
Sīla-pāramī	Merits of Morality
Nekkhamma-pāramī	Merits of Renunciation
Paññā-pāramī	Merits of Wisdom
Viriya-pāramī	Merits of Perseverance
Khanti-pāramī	Merits of Fortitude
Sacca-pāramī	Merits of Truthfulness
Adhiṭṭhāna-pāramī	Merits of Resolution
Mettā-pāramī	Merits of Loving-kindness
Upekkhā-pāramī	Merits of Equanimity

*Ninefold: *Sotāpatti-magga, sotāpatti-phala, sakadāgāmi-magga, sakadāgāmi-phala, anāgāmi-magga, anāgāmi-phala, arahatta-magga, arahatta-phala, and nibbāna.*

which I have practiced and accumulated for a hundred existences, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand existences. Which I have practiced and accumulated from the beginning, whether remembered or not, may all these accumulated *paramis* aid me to attain the path *(magga)* and the fruit *(phala)* as at this moment.

Nibbāna paccayo hotu
May this be the means whereby nibbāna is ultimately attained.

Appendix F

GLOSSARY

abhiññā	Supernormal powers and knowledge, consisting of five mundane *(lokiya)* powers attainable through various degrees of mind concentration *(jhāna)* and one supra-mundane *(lokuttara)* power attainable through insight penetration *(vipassanā).*
adhicitta	higher mentality
adhipaññā	higher wisdom
adhisīla	higher morality
ajahn	Thai word for teacher or meditation instructor
akusala	unwholesome, immoral, de-meritorious
āloka-kasiṇa	spherical light object of concentration, such as a clear, bright and luminous crystal sphere
anāgāmī	The "Non-Returner" to the Realm of Desire *(kāmaloka).* He or she has cut the five lower fetters and will be reborn in a higher world among the beings of

	the Pure Abodes *(suddhāvāsa).* From there, he or she will attain *nibbāna*.
ānāpānasati	a meditation technique based on mindfulness of the breath
anattā	non-self, absence of any grasping-self or ego (see supplementary notes)
aniccā	Impermanence. The rising and passing or change-ability of all compounds, or the appearance and disappearance of compounds. The meaning is that compound things never remain exactly the same for even one moment, but that they are vanishing and reappearing from moment to moment.
anupādisesa -nibbāna	Nibbāna without residue or any remainder of physical existence or the mundane aggregates.
anupassanā	contemplation of body, feelings, mental functions and *dhamma*
anusaya	Evil propensities or passions of the mind, latent, underlying conditioning, dormant mental impurity (also *anusaya-kilesa*).
anussati	Recollections (ten in number) mentioned in the scriptures for use in *samatha* meditation.

arahanta	Worthy One; the Holy One; Perfected One; One who has attained *nibbāna*.
arūpaloka	Formless Realms or Worlds.
asaṅkhata	Unconditioned.
āsava	Cankers, corrupting influences, defilements of the mind or mental states
asubha	Impure, loathsomeness, foulness, often mentioned in the context of the contemplation of the body's impure nature to overcome the delusion of thinking that the body is beautiful and forming attachments to it.
avijjā	Ignorance.
ariyapuggala	A Noble One, who has entered upon the Noble Path by virtue of his purity and spiritual insight into Ultimate Reality.
āyatana	The place or sphere where the most refined Dhammakāya-Arahatta can exist in nibbāna in the highest perfection.
bhikkhu	Buddhist monk who observes the 227 precepts of discipline.

brahmakāya	Synonymous with *dhammakāya*; Purest body (does not refer to the body of the Brahma-being of the *Brahmaloka*).
byāpāda	Ill will.
citta	Thought, mind, a state of consciousness.
dhamma	Phenomenon, nature, any object, the Five Aggregate elements.
Dhamma *Dhammā (plu.)*	The doctrine proclaimed by the Buddha after his Enlightenment. The natural laws pertaining to the True nature of existence; especially concerning the nature, cause, and cessation of suffering and the path that leads to the end of suffering (the *Four Noble Truths*).
Dhammakāya	The supra-mundane body which is of the purest element and is non-compound. It is not subject to the three characteristics of *aniccā, dukkhā*, and *anattā*.
Dhammakāya -Gotrabhū	Noble state wisdom.
Dhammakāya -Anāgāmī	Non-returner.

Dhammakāya -arahatta	Perfect One.
Dhammakāya -sakadāgāmī	Once Returner.
Dhammakāya -sotāpanna	Stream Winner, a state of attainment of the first state of holiness.
dhutaṅga	Austere or strict practices for shaking off the defilements.
dhuvaṃ	Permanent, stable.
dibbacakkhu	Divine eye, the faculty of supernormal vision, the power of seeing all that is taking place in the whole universe--e.g. the passing away and arising of beings in the different worlds such as the hells, the heavens, etc.
diṭṭhi	Views or understanding.
dosa	Aversion, hatred, anger.
dukkha	Suffering, unsatisfactoriness due to the transient nature of all compounds.
ekaggatā	One-pointedness (as in concentration of mind).
ekaggatā -ramaṇa	Sense of one-pointedness; concentration.

jhāna	State of meditative absorption.
kāmachanda	Sensual desire.
kamma	Volitional action.
kammaṭṭhāna	Subjects of meditation.
karuṇā	Compassion.
kasiṇa	A device used as an object of concentration.
kāya	Body or form.
khanda	The Five Groups of Existence; Five aggregates (corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness).
kilesa	Defilements.
kukkucca	Worry, uneasiness or conscience.
kusala	Wholesome, meritorious.
kusala kamma	A wholesome or meritorious action which bears fortunate results in the future.
lobha	Greed.
lokiya	Mundane.
lokuttara	Supra-mundane.

Luang Phor	Thai word for addressing a senior *bhikkhu*; it has the meaning of "Reverend Father"
magga	Path.
Māra	The Evil One; Death; the Tempter.
mettā	Loving-kindness.
middha	Sloth.
moha	Delusion.
muditā	Sympathetic joy.
nāma-rūpa	Mind and form, mind-body complex, psycho-physical organism.
nibbāna	(Sanskrit = *nirvāna*); Literally "extinction" (of greed, hatred and delusion).
niccaṃ	Perpetuality, lasting, constant.
nivaraṇa	Hindrances *(to Right Wisdom)*
paññā	Wisdom.
pātimokkha	Disciplinary Code which represents the 227 monk's rules; it is read before the assembled community of fully ordained monks (*bhikkhus*).

parikamma -nimitta	Preliminary vision, initial visualization of the *kasiṇa* or meditation object (as remembered).
paṭhama jhāna	First state of absorption.
paṭhama -magga	Preliminary sign (like the light sphere) which "appears" when a basic level of concentration is reached.
paṭibhāga -nimitta	Counter image of the meditation object which is very clear, bright and translucent. It can be made smaller or enlarged at will. This stage of vision comes after further development from the *uggaha-nimitta.*
phala	Fruit, result, consequence, effect.
pubbe-nivāsānussati-ñāṇa	Supernormal knowledge of the recollection of previous existences.
puthujjana	An ordinary person, a worldling, one who has not cut at least the first three fetters. Not a *Noble One*.
rūpa-brahma	The beings or deities of the sixteen planes of the *Form-Brahma* World.
sakadāgāmī	Once-returner, one who has to return and be born once more before attaining emancipation or arahantaship.

sakkāyadiṭṭhi	View regarding personality (wrong view with regards to the common characteristics of all compounds).
samādhi	Concentration (a meditative state).
sāmaṇera	Novice monk.
samatha	A technique to develop mental concentration by using a concentration device or *kasiṇa* (the Buddha has prescribed forty all together). Its object is tranquility, calmness, and one pointedness, which leads to *jhānas*.
sammā -arahaṃ	*Sammā* is from *sammāsambuddho* which means the Buddha's supreme Right Enlightenment or Supreme Right Wisdom. The word arahaṃ means the virtue of Buddha's being far away from passions, representing Perfect Purity. These are the repetitive words *(parikamma-bhāvanā)* used in the *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach of meditation.
saṃsāra	The rounds of repeated becoming. The cycle of birth, old age, sickness and death.
saṅyojana	The Ten Fetters.
saṅkhāra	Formations, formed things, compounds.

saññā	Perception, memory.
sati	Mindfulness.
satipaṭṭhāna	Foundations of mindfulness.
sīla	Precepts of morality, purity of conduct (body, speech and mind), practice of restraint of the senses.
sīlabbata-parāmāsa	Clinging to rites and rituals (following wrong practices and believing them to be the path of purification).
sotāpanna	"Stream-enterer", entered on the path of *Nobleness*, the first stage of Noble *Discipleship* (at least the first three of the *Ten Fetters* have been cut to attain this level.)
suññatā	Voidness, emptiness (of defilements). In *Majjhima Nikāya* 121, ...the voiding of the mind of the cankers, 'in the attainment of being *Arahanta*, is regarded as the "fully purified and incomparably highest *Voidness*".
tādi	Firm, stable.
thīna	Torper.
uddhacca	Restlessness.

uggaha -nimitta	Acquired image.
upāsaka	Male lay-follower who has faith and has taken refuge in the Buddha, his Doctrine and *His Community of Noble Disciples*, a true disciple takes on the minimum training in the observation of the *Five Precepts (pañca-sīla)* and abstains from wrong livelihood such as trading in arms, living beings, meat, alcohol and poison (ie. anything which causes harm or hurt).
upāsikā	Female lay follower, feminine of *upāsaka.*
upekkhā	Equanimity.
uposatha day	Holy Day (new quarter, half, three-quarter and full moon).
uposathagga	The shrine hall within a monastery where the Disciplinary Code *(pāti-mokkha)* is read on full-moon and new-moon days.
vedanā	Feeling.
vicāra	Sustained thought (on the object of concentration).
vicikicchā	Doubtfulness (on the *Dhamma* practices leading to *nibbāna*).

vijjā	Higher knowledge, transcendental wisdom.
vimutti	Release, emancipation.
vimutti -ñāṇadassana	A state of attainment of knowledge and insight of salvation or deliverance.
viññāṇa	Consciousness.
vipāka	Result.
vipassanā	Penetrative insight, intuitive vision, seeing as it is.
visaṅkhāra	The non-compound.
wan phra	Thai word for the *uposatha* day.
wat	Thai word for monastery (e.g. Wat Paknam means Paknam Monastery).

Appendix G

NOTES

1 Warder, A. K., 1991. Introduction to Pali. (Third Edition). Oxford: The Pali Text Society.

2 Dhammapataṭṭhakathā, **Thai Textbook, Volume 7,** *aparaṃ pañcasata bhikkhu* subject. Published by Mahamakuta Buddhist University, B.E. 2532, p. 62.

3 **Sutta and Commentary (An Interpretation)** *Khuddaka-Nikāya, Itivuttaka Dhātu-sutta.* Published by Mahamakuta Buddhist University, B.E. 2525, p. 310.

4 Dhammapataṭṭhakathā, **Thai Textbook, Volume 6,** *Bhikkhūhi-puṭṭha-pañha* Subject. Published by Mahamakuta Buddhist University, B.E. 2528, p. 180.

5 Dhammapataṭṭhakathā, **Thai Textbook, Volume 6,** *Aññatara-Upāsaka* and Pasenadikosala subjects (2). Published by Mahamakuta Buddhist University, B.E. 2528, p. 132.

6 *Pāṭaligāmiya-Vagga Udāna Nibbāna Sutta III,* Sutta.

7 Buddhaghosa, Bhadantācariya, (5th century B.E.). *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga).* Translated by Bhikkhu Ñanamolī. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (Third Edition) 1975. The forty

meditation subjects are summarized in Chapter III stanza 104 on page 112.

8 *saṅkhāra:*

The word has several meanings. In the wide sense, it embraces all existing things, i.e., the material universe. *Saṅkhāra* includes everything of which impermanence is the inherent characteristic, or everything which springs from a cause.

In the context of the formula *sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā,* the term *saṅkhāra* refers to existence or matter, the three characteristics (*ti-lakkhaṇa*) of impermanence, suffering and the non-existence of "self". In the *Dhammapada, dhamma* is substituted for *saṅkhāra* in the third formula. The commentaries interpret both *saṅkhāra* and *dhamma* in the sense of the grasping *Five Aggregates* or *Khandhas*, or conditioned nature.

anattā, nibbāna and Dhammakāya

The subjects of *anattā* and *nibbāna* have been the crux of disputes over Buddha's Teachings for centuries. Some Buddhist scholars unreservedly cling to the view that 'abiding self' is neither applicable to any conditioned phenomenon nor to *nibbāna*, the unconditioned element.

The *Vijjā Dhammakāya* approach, representing the teaching of the most Venerable Luang Phor Wat Paknam, by whose ernest efforts and wisdom

the age-old, long-forgotten vista of the original teachings of Lord Buddha were reopened, maintains that *anattā*, the "abiding self" or "non-self" is compound in nature and hence is subject to the flux of changes and suffering, but this is only meant on the mundane level. The emergence of *Dhammakāya*, the purest and most refined of elements occurs in the supra-mundane sphere of *nibbāna*, the unconditioned.

Vijjā Dhammakāya invites earnest seekers 'to come and see' for themselves. Abundance of materials and references can be found in the scriptures, but the essence of the Teachings can best be perceived through direct experience. The *Vijjā Dhammkāya* approach offers the most efficient way to the *Path of Purification* and *Wisdom*.

9 *Sutta, Khuddaka-Nikāya, Dhammapada, Bhikkhu Vagga.*

10 T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Dialogue of the Buddha part III, The Pali Text Society.

Appendix H

DHAMMAKĀYA BUDDHIST MEDITATION CENTERS ABROAD

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